Lililicious~may its fragrance encompass you
mmmlous@rcrizon.net

ピエタ
pietà
I
榛野なな恵

Let's sit on the beach
and wait for the dawn

Let's see the moment when time begins
to flow in space

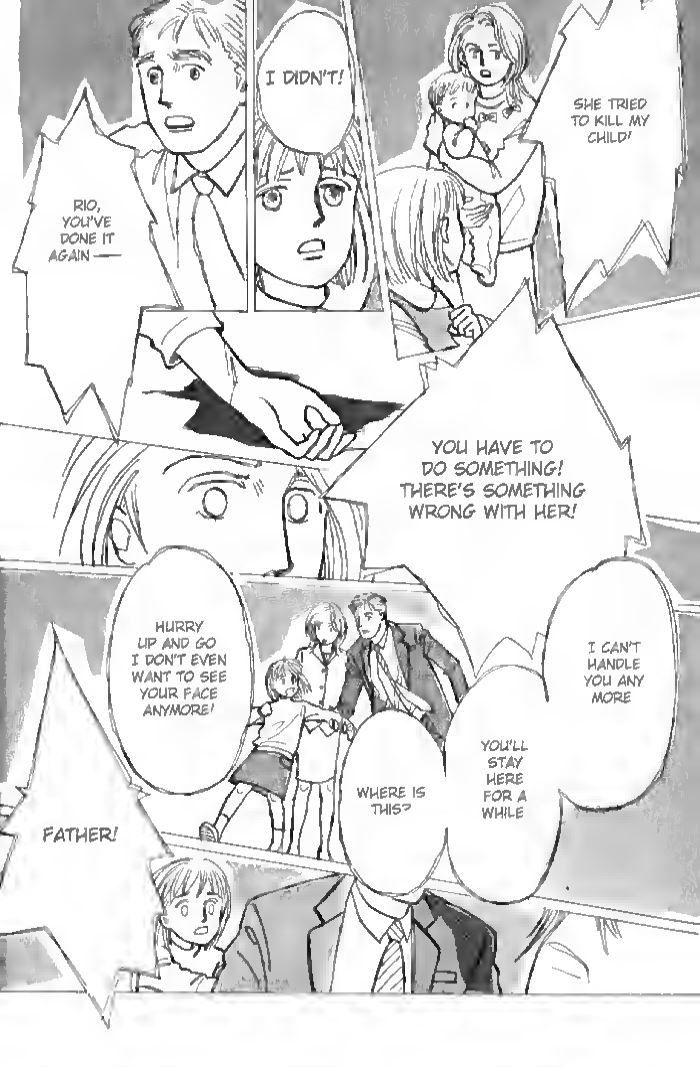
We'll link our hands
and never let go,

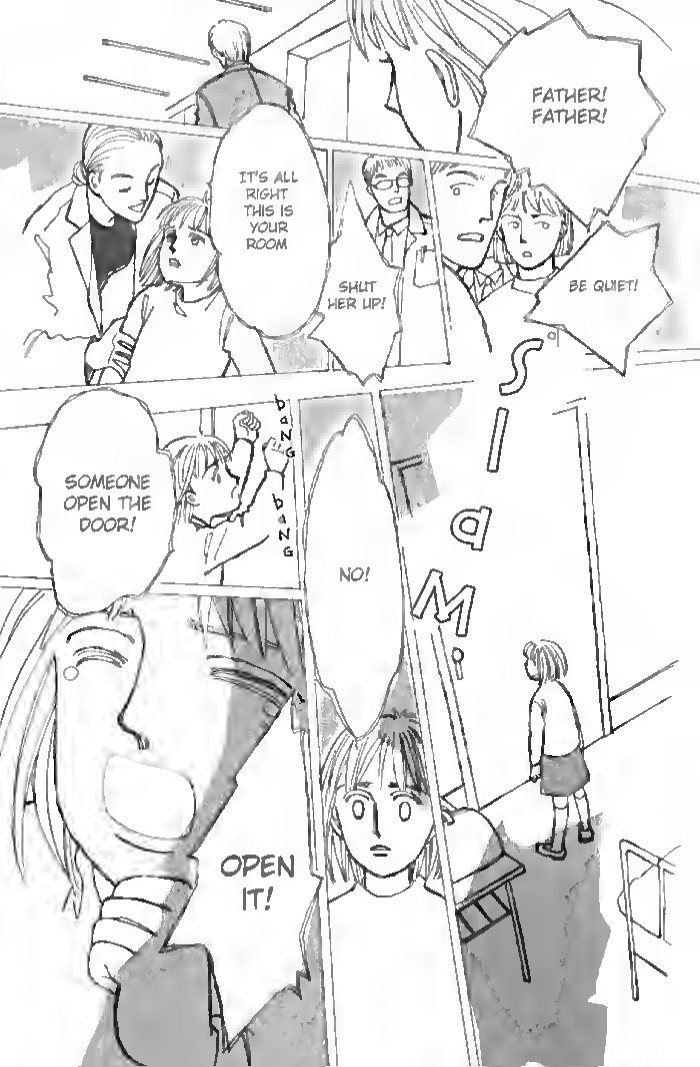
Nodding at the tender premonition

ピエタ
pieta
#1
Haruno Nanane

NN...

I SAW IT!
I SAW IT!
THIS GIRL JUST——
IT WAS HER!

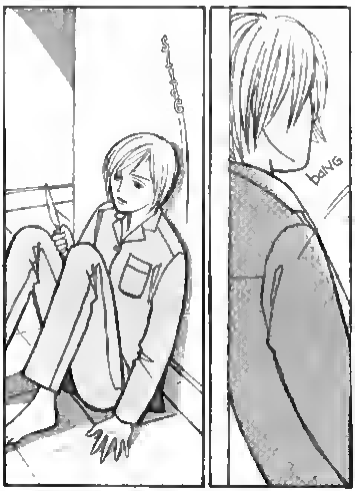

RIO, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN——
I DIDN'T!
SHE TRIED TO KILL MY CHILD!
YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER!
HURRY UP AND GO I DON'T EVEN WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE ANYMORE!
I CAN'T HANDLE YOU ANY MORE
FATHER!
WHERE IS THIS?
YOU'LL STAY HERE FOR A WHILE

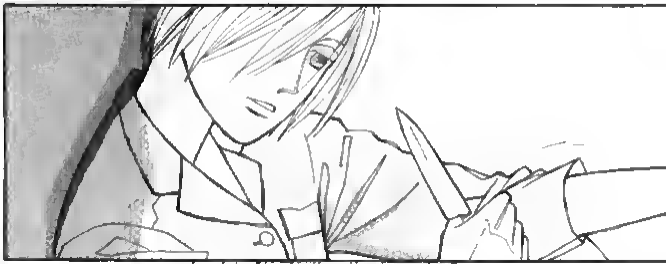

FATHER! FATHER!
BE QUIET!
IT'S ALL RIGHT THIS IS YOUR ROOM
SHUT HER UP!
SLAM!
SOMEONE OPEN THE DOOR!
bang bang bang
NO!
OPEN IT!

SOMEONE LET ME OUT OF HERE!

EDITED BY: KALIA
TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
SCANNED BY: TINY SNOWFAIRY

LILILICIOUS - MAY IT'S FRAGRANCE ENCOMPASS YOU
#LILILICIOUS@IRC.MIRCX.COM

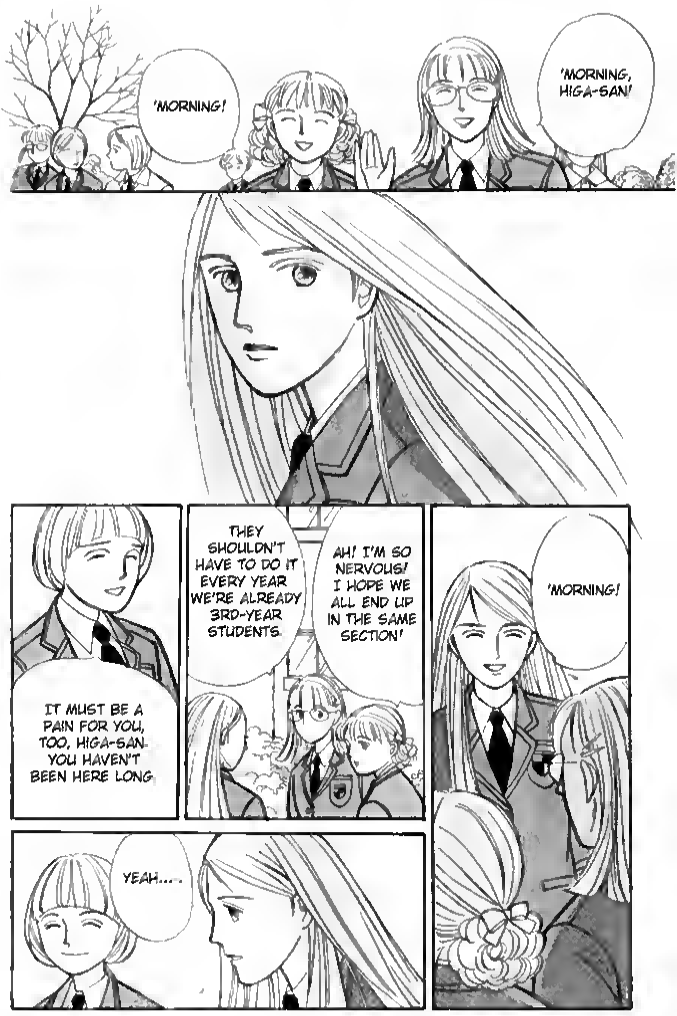

bang



DRIP
STAB
hee

HELP.

SOMEONE
SOMEONE


'MORNING!
'MORNING, HIGA-SAN!
'MORNING!
AH! I'M SO NERVOUS! I HOPE WE ALL END UP IN THE SAME SECTION!
THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO DO IT EVERY YEAR WE'RE ALREADY 3RD-YEAR STUDENTS.
IT MUST BE A PAIN FOR YOU, TOO, HIGA-SAN. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN HERE LONG.
YEAH....

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TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
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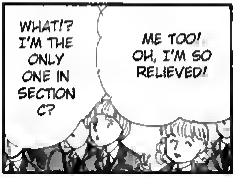
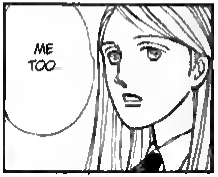
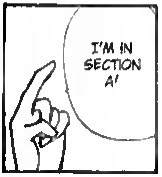
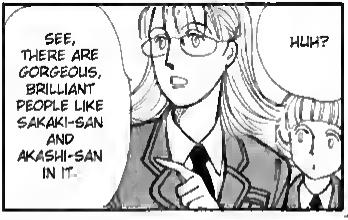
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ANYWAY?"
BUT SINCE THERE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT COURSES, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT SECTION YOU'RE IN. AND WE'RE ALL IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL ANYWAY.

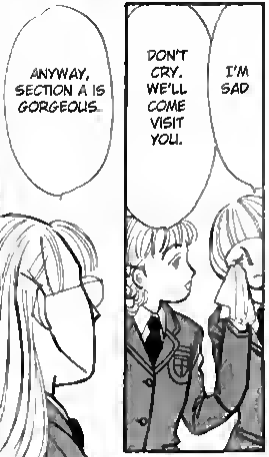
A
B
C

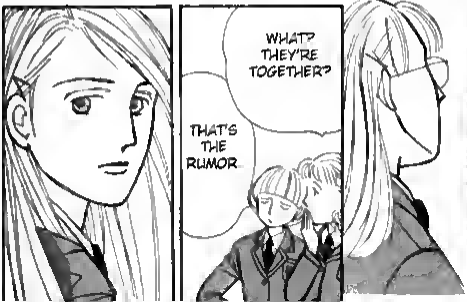

WHAT!? I'M THE ONLY ONE IN SECTION C?
ME TOO! OH, I'M SO RELIEVED!

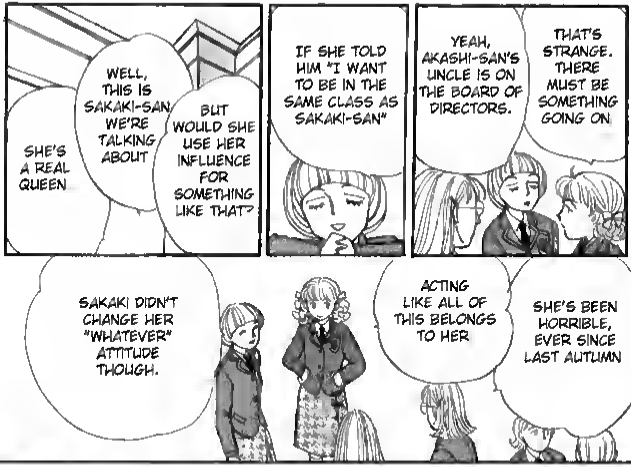

ME TOO.

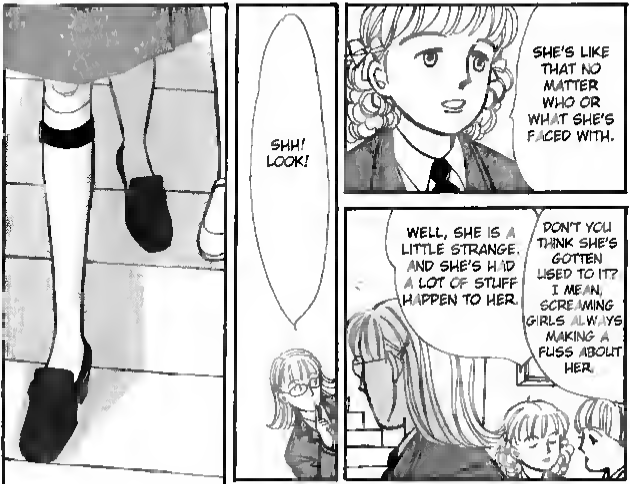

I'M IN SECTION A!

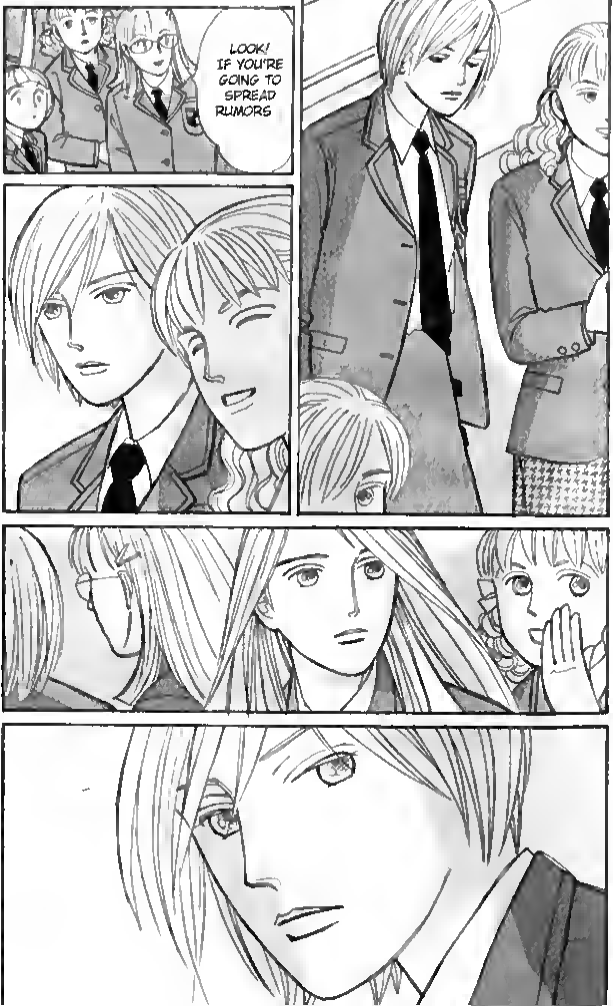

SEE, THERE ARE GORGEOUS, BRILLIANT PEOPLE LIKE SAKAKI-SAN AND AKASHI-SAN IN IT.
HUH?

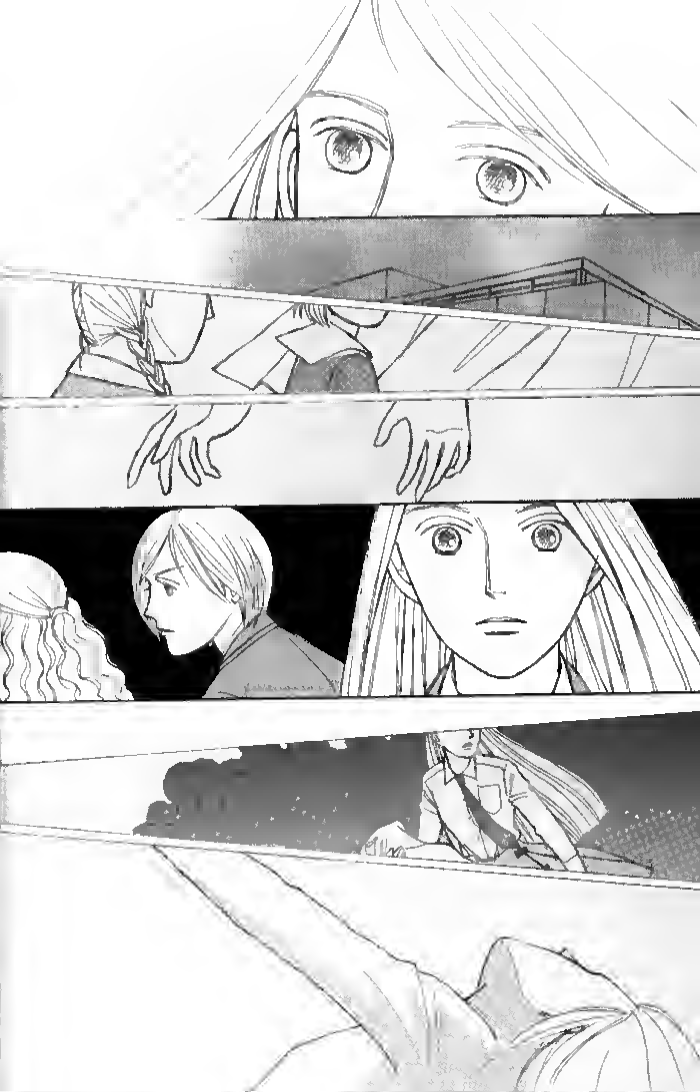

ANYWAY, SECTION A IS GORGEOUS.
I'M SAD
DON'T CRY. WE'LL COME VISIT YOU.


WHAT? THEY'RE TOGETHER?
THAT'S THE RUMOR.

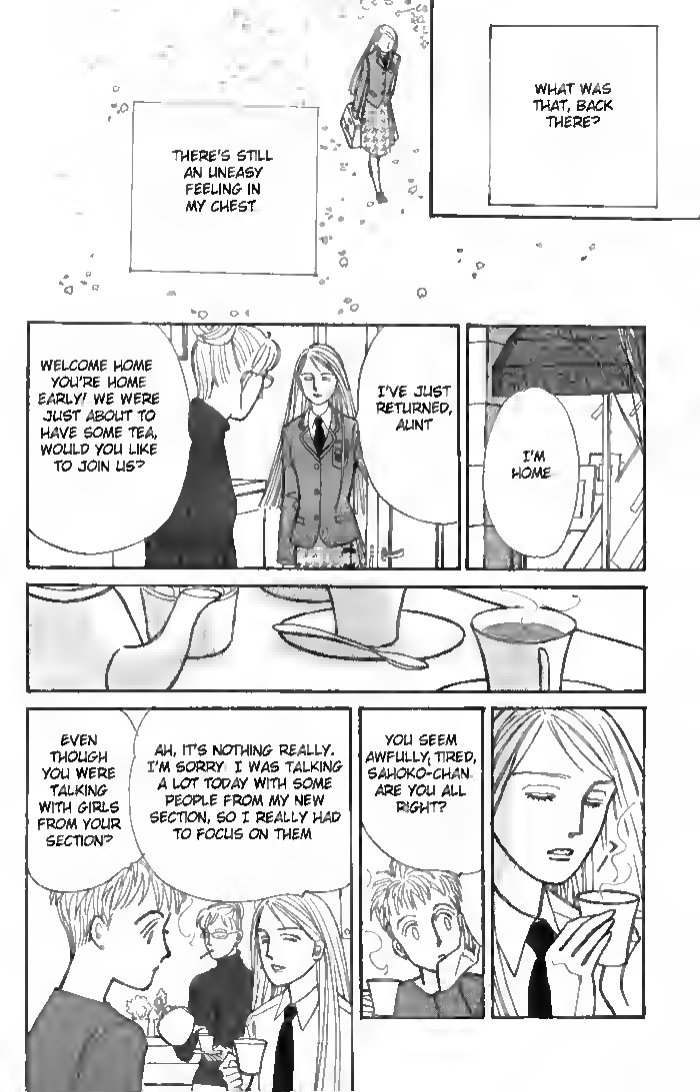

SHE'S A REAL QUEEN
WELL, THIS IS SAKAKI-SAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT
BUT WOULD SHE USE HER INFLUENCE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
IF SHE TOLD HIM "I WANT TO BE IN THE SAME CLASS AS SAKAKI-SAN"
YEAH, AKASHI-SAN'S UNCLE IS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
THAT'S STRANGE. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING GOING ON.
SAKAKI DIDN'T CHANGE HER "WHATEVER" ATTITUDE THOUGH.
ACTING LIKE ALL OF THIS BELONGS TO HER
SHE'S BEEN HORRIBLE, EVER SINCE LAST AUTUMN

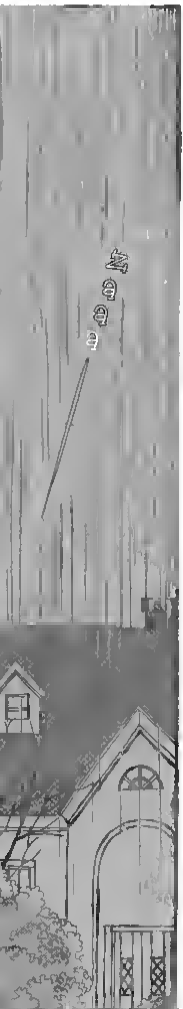

SHH! LOOK!
SHE'S LIKE THAT NO MATTER WHO OR WHAT SHE'S FACED WITH.
WELL, SHE IS A LITTLE STRANGE. AND SHE'S HAD A LOT OF STUFF HAPPEN TO HER.
DON'T YOU THINK SHE'S GOTTEN USED TO IT? I MEAN, SCREAMING GIRLS ALWAYS MAKING A FUSS ABOUT HER.

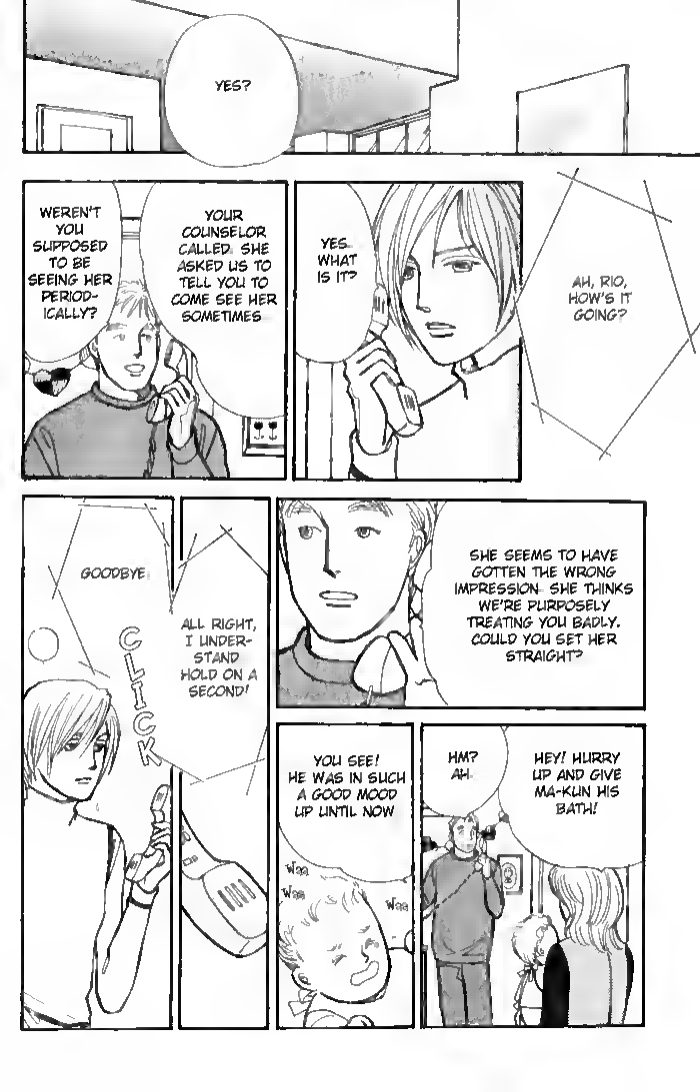

LOOK! IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPREAD RUMORS

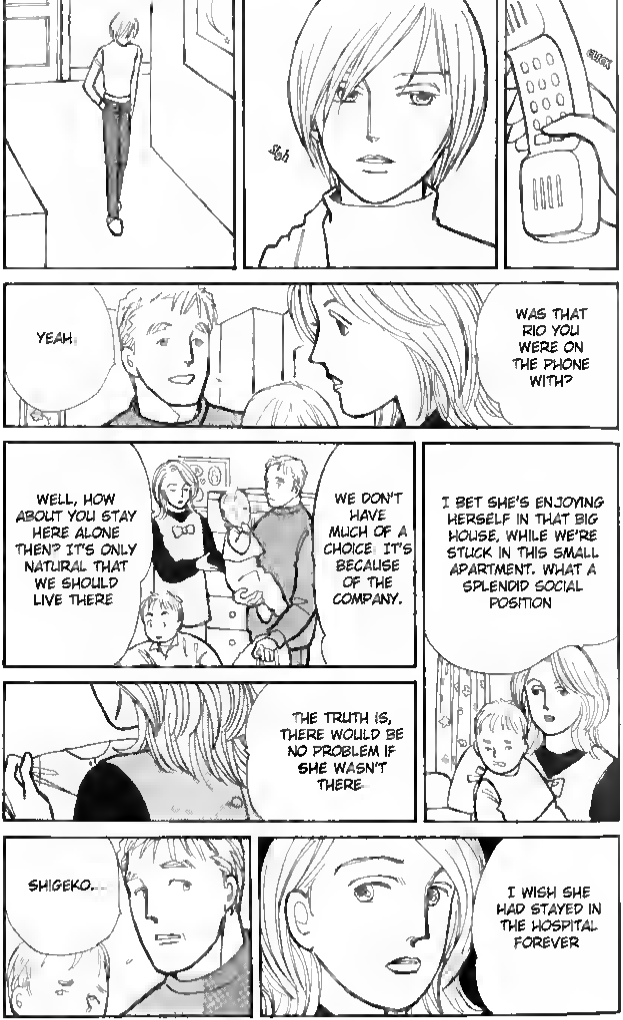


WHAT'S WRONG, HIGA-SAN?
WHAT? UH ...
NOTHING


WHAT WAS THAT, BACK THERE?
THERE'S STILL AN UNEASY FEELING IN MY CHEST
I'M HOME
I'VE JUST RETURNED, AUNT
WELCOME HOME YOU'RE HOME EARLY! WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO HAVE SOME TEA, WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?
YOU SEEM AWFULLY TIRED, SAHOKO-CHAN. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
AH, IT'S NOTHING REALLY. I'M SORRY. I WAS TALKING A LOT TODAY WITH SOME PEOPLE FROM MY NEW SECTION, SO I REALLY HAD TO FOCUS ON THEM
EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE TALKING WITH GIRLS FROM YOUR SECTION?


BEFORE I SPEAK, I CONSIDER WHETHER WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY WILL BE APPROPRIATE. ANYWAY, I CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE ANY MISTAKES.
I HAVE TO DO MY BEST SO THAT I DON'T CAUSE ANY MORE TROUBLE FOR MY PARENTS.
SAHOKO-CHAN, WHEN YOU CAME TO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE, I THOUGHT THAT WE AGREED THAT YOU WOULD FOLLOW MY POLICIES.
DON'T FEEL THAT YOU OWE ME ANYTHING.
YOU SHOULD TAKE IT EASY AND BE YOURSELF. DON'T TRY TO FIT YOURSELF INTO SOME MOLD.
YES, MA'AM. I UNDERSTAND...


YES?
WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING HER PERIOD-ICALLY?
YOUR COUNSELOR CALLED. SHE ASKED US TO TELL YOU TO COME SEE HER SOMETIMES
YES. WHAT IS IT?
AH, RIO, HOW'S IT GOING?
GOODBYE
CLICK
ALL RIGHT, I UNDER-STAND HOLD ON A SECOND!
SHE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN THE WRONG IMPRESSION. SHE THINKS WE'RE PURPOSELY TREATING YOU BADLY. COULD YOU SET HER STRAIGHT?
YOU SEE! HE WAS IN SUCH A GOOD MOOD UP UNTIL NOW
Waa
Waa
Waa
HM? AH.
HEY! HURRY UP AND GIVE MA-KUN HIS BATH!


YEAH.
WAS THAT RIO YOU WERE ON THE PHONE WITH?
WELL, HOW ABOUT YOU STAY HERE ALONE THEN? IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT WE SHOULD LIVE THERE
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE. IT'S BECAUSE OF THE COMPANY.
I BET SHE'S ENJOYING HERSELF IN THAT BIG HOUSE, WHILE WE'RE STUCK IN THIS SMALL APARTMENT. WHAT A SPLENDID SOCIAL POSITION
THE TRUTH IS, THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IF SHE WASN'T THERE
SHIGEKO...
I WISH SHE HAD STAYED IN THE HOSPITAL FOREVER

WHERE'S MOM? IS SHE OUT SHOPPING?

WHAT WAS SHE THINKING, LEAVING YOU HERE LIKE THIS?
NOT COMING BACK?
YOUR MOTHER LEFT.
SHE'S PROBABLY NOT COMING BACK
RIO, YOUR MOTHER IS A HORRIBLE WOMAN
REMEMBER THAT.
R
I LOVE MOM
SHE HASN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG
THIS IS MY FAULT.
I'M SURE OF IT

I HATE
MYSELF.

AH, THE SUDDEN ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT?
DID YOU SEE IT? THAT TV SHOW THAT WAS ON YESTERDAY?
YEAH, I SAW IT! IT TOTALLY SURPRISED ME, I DIDN'T SEE IT COMING! THEY DO SUIT EACH OTHER, THOUGH.
AH! YOU KNOW, IT'S PEOPLE WHO SHOUT THINGS LIKE THAT WHO END UP GETTING MARRIED LATE.
"LET'S CRY FROM HAPPINESS!", ♡ RIGHT? SO BEAUTIFUL! DARN IT, I DON'T CARE ABOUT EXAMS ANYMORE! I WANT TO GET MARRIED RIGHT AWAY!
WHAT? NO, I DON'T THINK I AM. BUT, WELL, MAYBE I AM...
YEAH, HIGA-SAN DOES SEEM LIKE THAT TYPE. SHE'LL PROBABLY HAVE A HAPPY LIFE.
SAHOKO-CHAN IS THE TYPE TO DECIDE QUICKLY
DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT, IT'S BAD LUCK!

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TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
SCANNED BY: TINY SNOWFAIRY

hahaha
haha
HMPH. I GUESS HAPPINESS AND FATE ARE FAR AWAY FOR ME
YOU SHOULD COME!
YOU WANT TO COME TOO, HIGA-SAN?
WELL THEN, DO YOU WANT TO COME TO MY HOUSE AFTER SCHOOL? I TAPED IT.
I MISSED THAT PRESS CONFERENCE! DARN IT!
...
OKAY...
YEAH!
THERE ARE A LOT OF PRETTY HOUSES IN THIS AREA.

I WANT TO LIVE THERE!
HEY, LOOK AT THAT ONE! IT'S SUPER CUTE
WHAT? WHY?
SHE LIVES THERE ALL ALONE IN THAT BIG HOUSE, IT SEEMS
WHAT!?
OH, THAT'S SAKAKI-SAN'S HOUSE.
OOH, WHAT IS IT, WHAT IS IT!?
CITY A IS SORT OF FAR AWAY, BUT NOT FAR ENOUGH THAT SHE COULDN'T COMMUTE HERE FROM THERE
HER FATHER WAS TRANSFERRED TO CITY A, SO THE FAMILY MOVED THERE, BUT SHE STAYED HERE
SAKAKI-SAN'S MOTHER LEFT HOME YEARS AGO.
WELL, IT SEEMS THE SITUATION IS SORT OF COMPLICATED.

YOU KNOW A LOT OF DETAILS, AYA-CHAN
WELL, IT'S MY MOTHER'S NETWORK THE WOMEN AROUND HERE KNOW A LOT OF GOSSIP.
IT'S SORT OF SCARY
WOW.
AND RIGHT AFTER THAT, HER FATHER REMARRIED WITH A REALLY YOUNG WOMAN, BUT RIGHT AFTER, HER PREGNANCY SHOWED WELL, IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS THE CHILD OF A PREVIOUS LOVER.
THEY EVEN HAD TO CALL AN AMBULANCE ONCE
AFTER THAT, IT SEEMS THERE WAS STILL A LOT OF FRICTION BETWEEN THEM, I'M NOT SURE WHY
I FOUND ONE OF YOUR PHOTO ALBUMS. THIS IS YOU WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE, RIGHT? YOU WERE SO CUTE!
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

MY YOUNGER SISTER
OH, WHO'S THE BABY?
OH I SEE...
YOUNGER SISTER? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD ONE.
I ONLY HAD ONE FOR SIX MONTHS
HEY, WHO'S THE PRETTY WOMAN? YOUR MOTHER?
WHAT? HEY! I WAS STILL LOOKING AT THAT.

I'M BORED I'M GOING HOME
YOU CAN'T GO HOME
YOU CAN'T.

I'M SORRY FOR SKIPPING APPOINTMENTS
I'M GLAD YOU CAME. I GOT THESE AT A CONFERENCE IN KYUSHU. THEY'RE PRETTY TASTY. HELP YOURSELF
I'M STILL ALIVE
SO, HOW HAVE THINGS BEEN LATELY?
THAT'S OKAY. IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S YOUR DUTY TO COME. YOU COULD SAY IT'S JUST MY OPINION THAT YOU SHOULD.
HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?
YOU HAVE QUITE A SENSE OF HUMOR.
EVERY NIGHT, I HAVE THE SAME DREAM
I HATE SLEEPING MORE THAN ANYTHING

WHAT KIND OF DREAM?
I'M IN A DARK CORRIDOR, WITH A LOT OF DOORS.
EACH BECOMES A MEMORY FROM THE PAST, AN IMAGE OF SOMETHING THAT I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER. THEY ALL APPEAR IN FRONT OF ME, AND IT'S AS THOUGH THEY ARE ALL HAPPENING IN THE PRESENT.
IT'S LIKE A BAD PENALTY GAME
WHEN I OPEN A DOOR, THE ROOM IS PACKED TO THE CEILING WITH BALLOONS.
WHEN I PUSH THROUGH ONE OF THE GAPS AND ENTER THE ROOM, I CAN'T BREATHE.
BUT WHEN I STRUGGLE, THE BALLOONS ALL BREAK

I WONDER WHAT IT IS I DID.
AND IF IT IS, I WONDER WHAT IT IS A PUNISHMENT FOR
I DON'T REMEMBER, AND SO IT'S LIKE I'M BECOMING ONE OF THE BALLOONS FROM THE DREAM, AND AM GOING TO DRIFT AWAY SOMEWHERE.
I WANT SOMEONE TO CATCH ME, BUT I DON'T THINK IT WOULD GO WELL.
THE THING THAT BOTHERS ME THE MOST IS THAT I CAN'T CONTROL MYSELF.
I WONDER WHY IT IS THAT I'LL ALWAYS BE TRAPPED BY THE PAST, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT I JUST DON'T CARE ANYMORE

I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND IT.
NOT YET.
DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE? YOU HAVE ENTRANCE EXAMS NEXT YEAR, RIGHT? HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A FIRST CHOICE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "FUTURE?"
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD AT MATH, HAVEN'T YOU, RIO-KUN? I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT STUDY IN THAT FIELD IN THE FUTURE.
TIME IS FROZEN..

SHE'S HAVING REPEATED FLASHBACKS THAT CREATE WEAK EMOTIONAL RESPONSES, AS WELL AS FITS OF ANXIETY. SHE ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE SERIOUS INSOMNIA
SHE WONDERS ABOUT THE VALUE OF OUR EXISTENCE
THE FUTURE DOES NOT EXIST, ONLY THE PRESENT AND THE PAST. THE PRESENT IS SLOWLY BECOMING THE PAST. IT SEEMS LIKE THE ONLY THING LEFT IS THE PLACE ONE IS STANDING IN NOW.
I THINK SHE'S FIGHTING, WITH WILLPOWER. I'VE BEEN GIVING HER MEDICAL TREATMENT, BUT THAT HAS ITS LIMITS
WE NEED SOMETHING ELSE. WE NEED TO FIND SOME OTHER WAY OF HEALING HER
DID SHE SAY THAT HERSELF?
I THINK THAT'S STOPPED.
Have some
Here
WHAT ABOUT THE SELF-MUTILATION?
NO, YOU!
THE BLACK TEA?
AMAI!*
NO, BUT SHE DIDN'T GIVE ANY INDICATION SHE WAS CONTINUING TO DO IT, AND THERE WERE NO NEW WOUNDS.

*THIS CAN MEAN EITHER "SWEET," AS IN THE CASE OF FOOD, OR "OPTIMISTIC," AS WHEN DESCRIBING A PERSON.

WELL, OF COURSE, I WOULD BE HAPPY IF SHE WERE TO BECOME OUR DAUGHTER. IT WOULD BE LIKE A DREAM.
IT'S A VERY UNIQUE CASE, AND THERE ARE A LOT OF PROBLEMS, BUT I WANT TO TAKE THE RISK
YOU MEAN ADOPTING HER AS OUR DAUGHTER?
WON'T YOU RETHINK WHAT WE HAD DISCUSSED BEFORE?
THAT IS, OUR FEELINGS FOR HER ARE COMPOSED NOT ONLY OF LOVE, BUT OF A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL.
BUT, EVEN IF WE DON'T WANT TO, WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THINGS CLEARLY
BUT RIGHT NOW, THAT FAMILY IS ONLY A DANGER TO HER.
YES, THAT'S TRUE...
WE ARE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR HER CURRENT STATE BECAUSE OF THAT FACT, AND OUR REGRETS, WE CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM THIS, CAN WE?

EDITED BY: KALIA
TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
SCANNED BY: TINY SNOWFAIRY

CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
COME HERE. HURRY!
IT'LL GET EASIER, C'MON!
CLIMB HIGHER!

COME HERE HIGHER!
COME HERE.
EVERYONE GOES AWAY
THERE'S NO ONE LEFT
THERE'S NO ONE HERE

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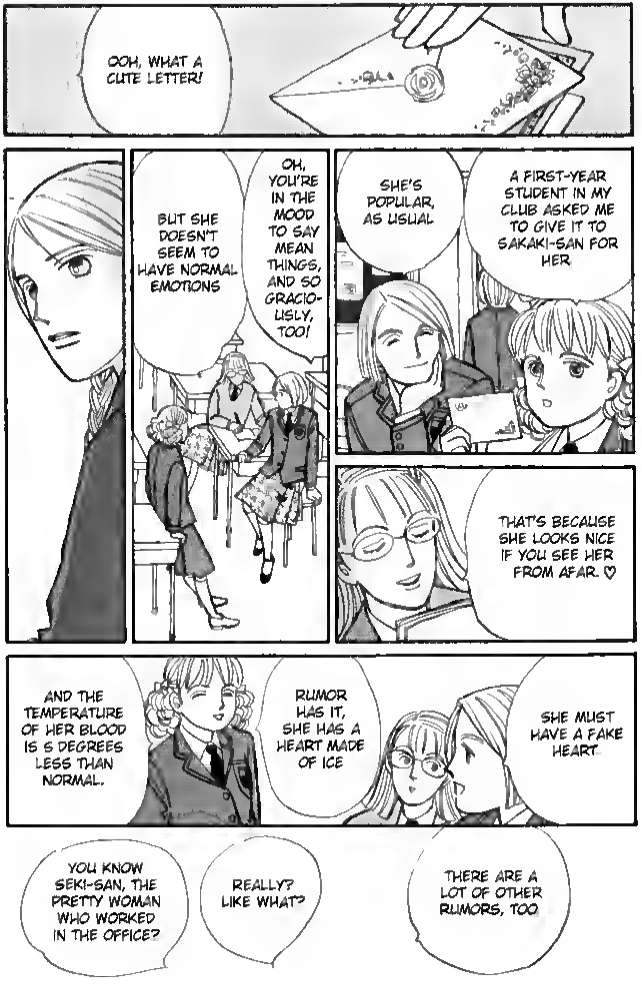
OOH, WHAT A CUTE LETTER!
A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT IN MY CLUB ASKED ME TO GIVE IT TO SAKAKI-SAN FOR HER
SHE'S POPULAR, AS USUAL
THAT'S BECAUSE SHE LOOKS NICE IF YOU SEE HER FROM AFAR. ♡
OH, YOU'RE IN THE MOOD TO SAY MEAN THINGS, AND SO GRACIOUSLY, TOO!
BUT SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE NORMAL EMOTIONS
SHE MUST HAVE A FAKE HEART
RUMOR HAS IT, SHE HAS A HEART MADE OF ICE
AND THE TEMPERATURE OF HER BLOOD IS 5 DEGREES LESS THAN NORMAL.
THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER RUMORS, TOO.
REALLY? LIKE WHAT?
YOU KNOW SEKI-SAN, THE PRETTY WOMAN WHO WORKED IN THE OFFICE?

WHAT!? NO FAIR!!
NO, I CAN'T TELL YOU
WELL, THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE REASON, BUT THE TRUTH IS—
WHAT? DIDN'T SHE GET MARRIED? THAT'S WHAT I HEARD
WELL, SHE QUIT RATHER SUDDENLY, DIDN'T SHE? I WONDER WHY THAT WAS?
WELL, DURING CLASSES, IN THE EMPTY LIBRARY—
WHAT!? WHAT IS IT?!
SOUNDS INTERESTING
HIGA-SAN
UH... UM, ERR... SAKAKI-SAN, THIS IS FROM A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT
♪
GO ON, I WANT TO HEAR WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

WHAT?
THIS WAY
drop
TAKEKAWA-SENSEI IS ASKING FOR YOU
UM...

IS THAT SO...
SECTION E, BUT I CAME PARTWAY THROUGH THE YEAR.
Step
WHAT SECTION WERE YOU IN LAST YEAR?
I'VE SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
RIO-CHAN!
I'M REALLY NOT SURE...
I COULD BE WRONG, BUT...
WHAT?

DO YOU REALLY ENJOY THEIR COMPANY?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I LOOKED FOR YOU ALL OVER!
LET'S GO!
SAKAKI-SAN, WHAT ABOUT TAKEKAWA-SENSEI?
HIGA-SAN, YOU'RE ALWAYS HANGING OUT WITH THOSE SAME GIRLS...
WHAT!?
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU OUTSIDE THE CLASS-ROOM FOR A MINUTE
OH, THAT WAS SOMETHING I MADE UP.

NOTHING.
WHAT DID YOU WANT WITH HIGA-SAN?
SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE SORT OF PERSON WHO WOULD DO THAT, SURPRISINGLY.
SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HER THAT MADE HER LEAVE HER PREVIOUS SCHOOL.
SHE CAME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEMESTER, AND WHEN SOMEONE ASKS HER ABOUT HER PREVIOUS SCHOOL, SHE WON'T GIVE THEM A STRAIGHT ANSWER.
THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT HER
RIO-CHAN!?

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TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
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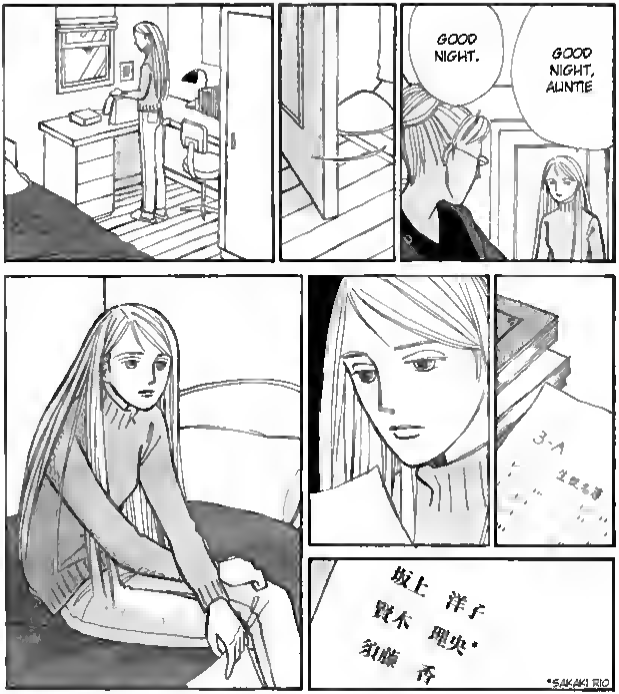
I'VE BEEN HERE FOR A LONG TIME

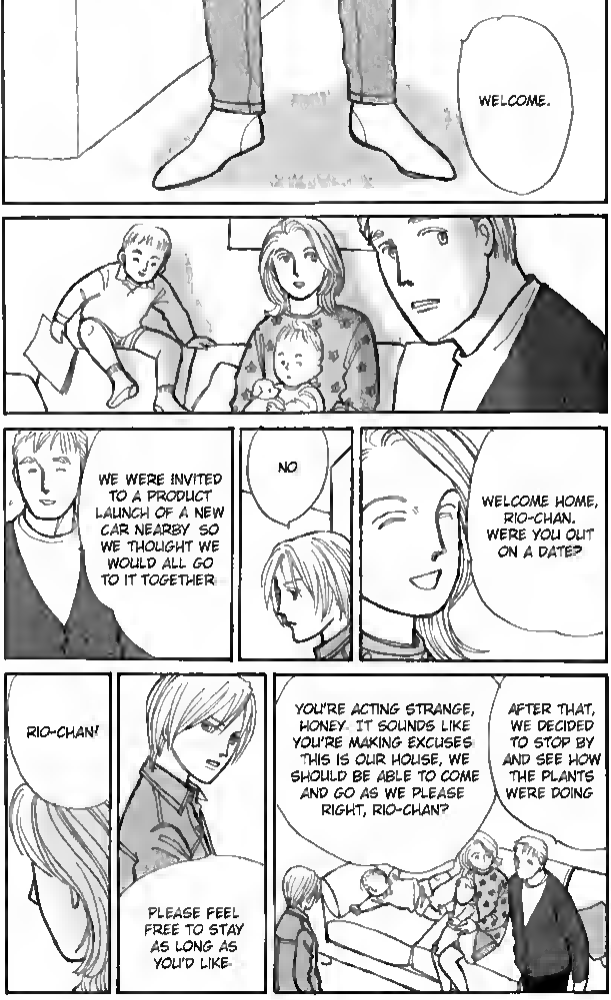
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A LONG TIME

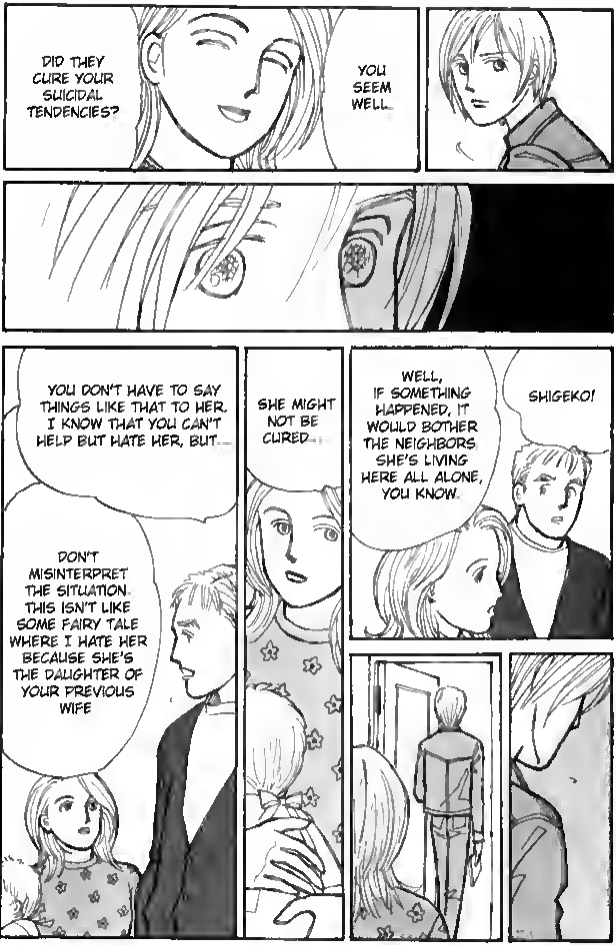


I CLOSE THE DOOR

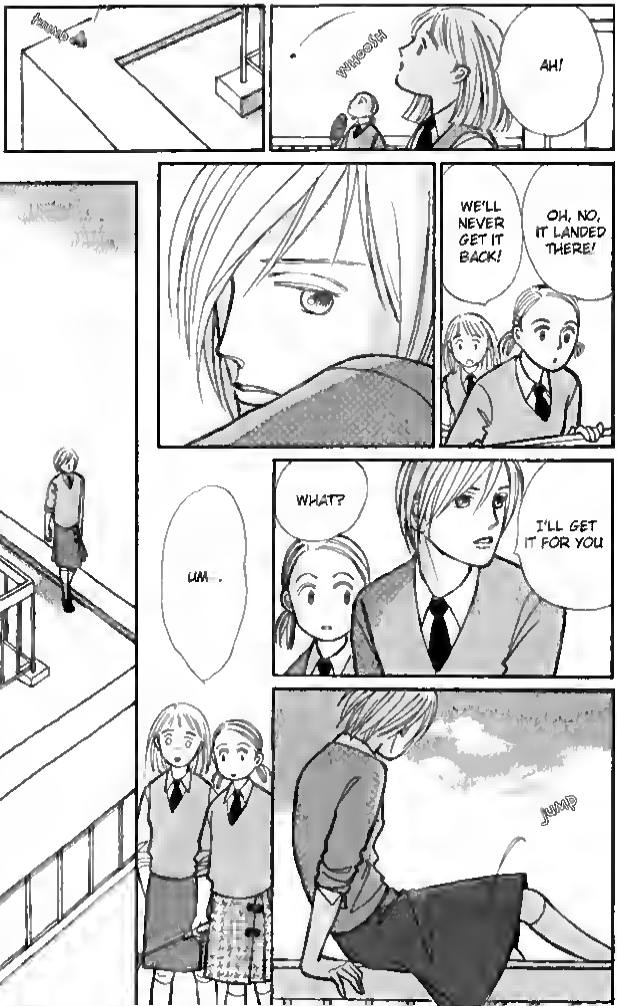
AND RETURN TO TIMELESS SPACE

.....
ha
ha
ha
ha
ha
ha

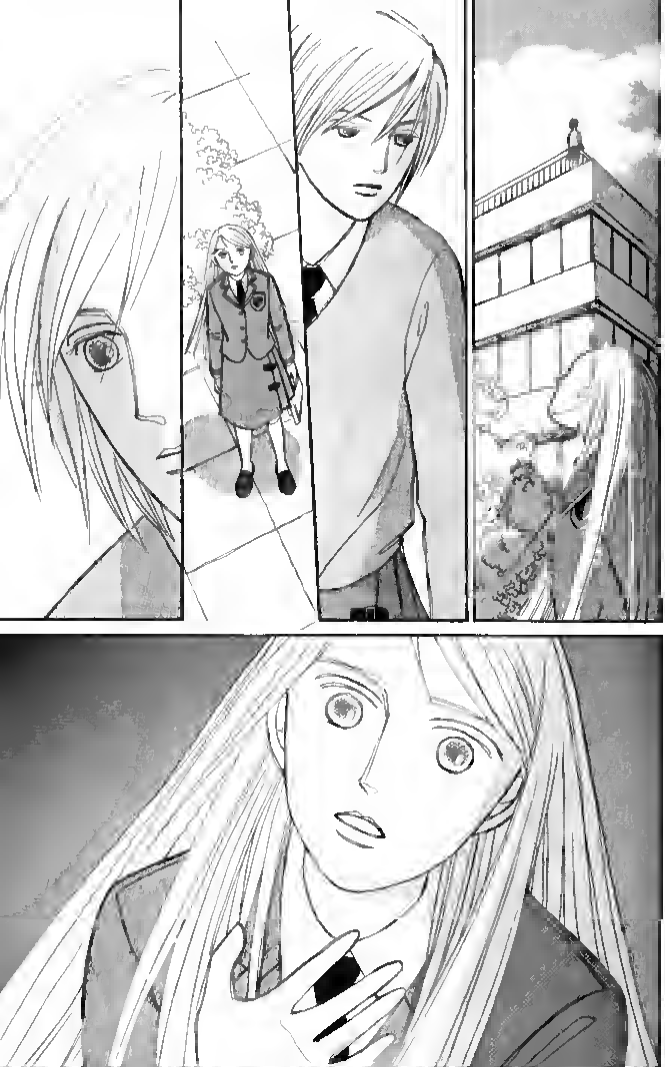

WELCOME.
WE WERE INVITED TO A PRODUCT LAUNCH OF A NEW CAR NEARBY SO WE THOUGHT WE WOULD ALL GO TO IT TOGETHER
NO
WELCOME HOME, RIO-CHAN. WERE YOU OUT ON A DATE?
RIO-CHAN!
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO STAY AS LONG AS YOU'D LIKE
YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE, HONEY. IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE MAKING EXCUSES THIS IS OUR HOUSE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME AND GO AS WE PLEASE RIGHT, RIO-CHAN?
AFTER THAT, WE DECIDED TO STOP BY AND SEE HOW THE PLANTS WERE DOING


DID THEY CURE YOUR SUICIDAL TENDENCIES?
YOU SEEM WELL.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT TO HER. I KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T HELP BUT HATE HER, BUT...
DON'T MISINTERPRET THE SITUATION. THIS ISN'T LIKE SOME FAIRY TALE WHERE I HATE HER BECAUSE SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF YOUR PREVIOUS WIFE
SHE MIGHT NOT BE CURED...
WELL, IF SOMETHING HAPPENED, IT WOULD BOTHER THE NEIGHBORS. SHE'S LIVING HERE ALL ALONE, YOU KNOW.
SHIGEKO!

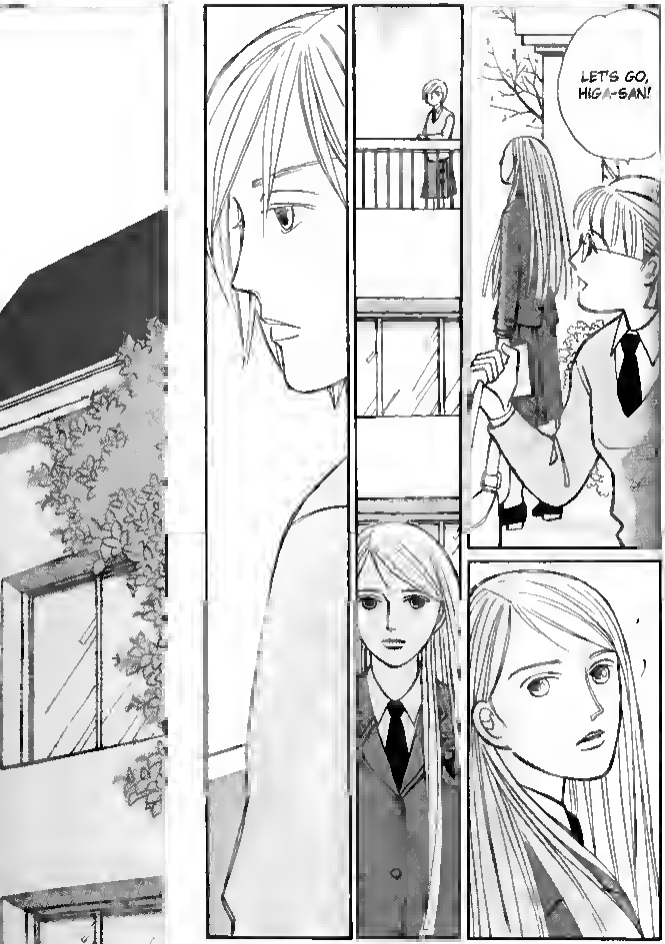
BUT RIO ISN'T—
I KNOW SHE IS THE SORT OF PERSON WHO WOULD DESTROY THAT.
I JUST WANT TO HAVE A NORMAL, HAPPY LIFE, LIKE I'VE DREAMED OF.
YOU CERTAINLY SEEM TO WORRY ABOUT HER A LOT.
……
YOUR PAST WIFE WAS PRETTY SHOWY, WASN'T SHE?
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT SHE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE YOUR CHILD.
AH! I REALLY DO LIKE THIS HOUSE. IT HAS SUCH A BIG GARDEN, TOO.
I KNOW I CAN'T COUNT ON YOU TO DO ANYTHING.
I HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY FOR US TO MOVE BACK SOON, FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN.


Pumpp
WHOOSH
AH!
WE'LL NEVER GET IT BACK!
OH, NO, IT LANDED THERE!
WHAT?
I'LL GET IT FOR YOU
UM...
JUMP

DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO FAR!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, SAKAKI-SAN!
!?
SIGH

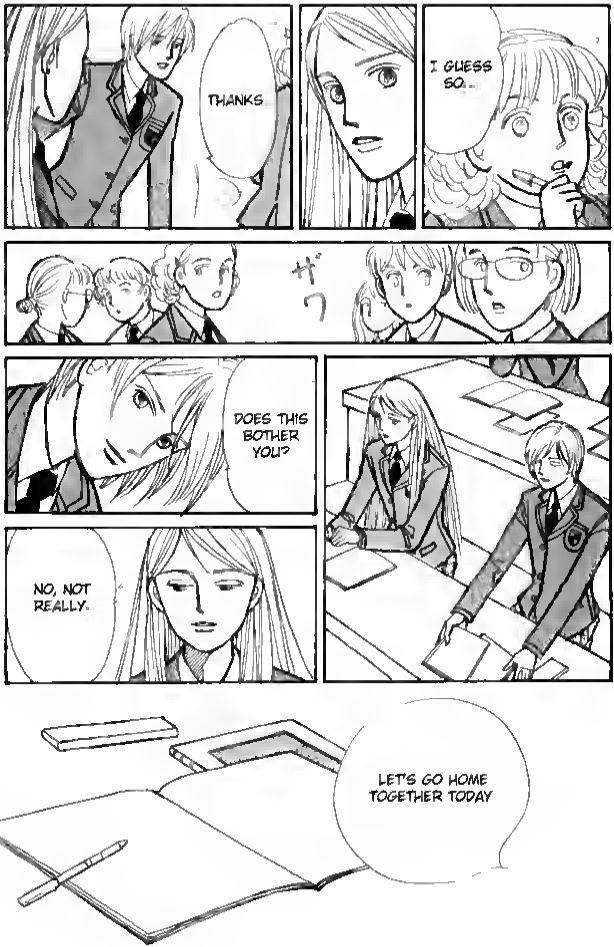


EDITED BY: KAIJA
TRANSLATED BY: SAILOR AVALON
SCANNED BY: TINY SNOWFAIRY

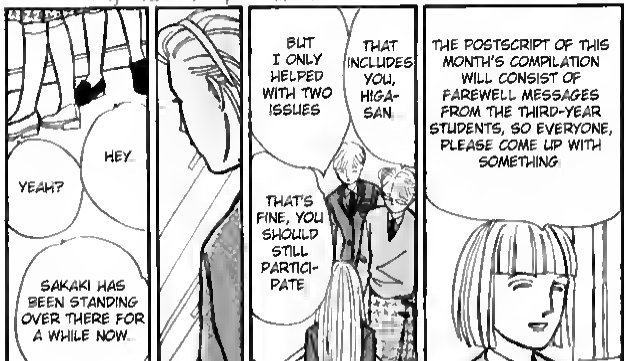

LET'S GO, HIGA-SAN!

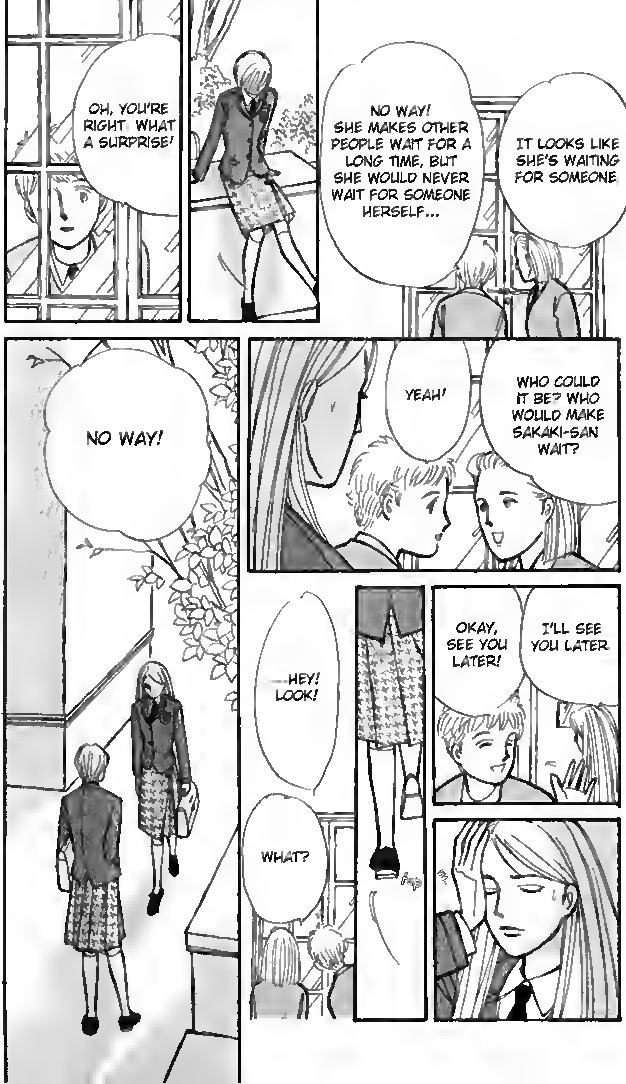
I'M FINE
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A BAD COLD. SHOULD YOU GO HOME, SAKAKI-SAN?
COUGH
THE TIERED CLASS-ROOM
WHERE'S THE NEXT CLASS?
OH, WE HAVE TO MOVE? THAT'S A PAIN
OH, SHOW ME, SHOW ME!
YEAH, FOR NOW
DID YOU FINISH, HIGA-SAN?
LET'S GO
KUN
OVER HERE, RIO-CHAN!

.....
.....
.....
SHE'S GONNA BE MAD
AKASHI'S REPUTATION IS RUINED!
YEAH, I DID. THE DECISIVE MOMENT!
DID YOU SEE THAT!
WOULD YOU SWITCH SEATS WITH ME, WAKANA-SAN?
bump


THANKS
I GUESS SO...
ザワ
DOES THIS BOTHER YOU?
NO, NOT REALLY.
LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER TODAY

I'M BUSY WITH A CLUB EVENT TODAY, SO I'LL BE LEAVING LATE.
THEN I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
DO I NEED A REASON FOR SOMETHING SO TRIVIAL?
WHY?
DING DONG DING


HEY.
YEAH?
SAKAKI HAS BEEN STANDING OVER THERE FOR A WHILE NOW.
BUT I ONLY HELPED WITH TWO ISSUES
THAT INCLUDES YOU, HIGA-SAN.
THAT'S FINE, YOU SHOULD STILL PARTICI-PATE
THE POSTSCRIPT OF THIS MONTH'S COMPILATION WILL CONSIST OF FAREWELL MESSAGES FROM THE THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS, SO EVERYONE, PLEASE COME UP WITH SOMETHING


OH, YOU'RE RIGHT. WHAT A SURPRISE!
NO WAY! SHE MAKES OTHER PEOPLE WAIT FOR A LONG TIME, BUT SHE WOULD NEVER WAIT FOR SOMEONE HERSELF...
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S WAITING FOR SOMEONE
NO WAY!
YEAH!
WHO COULD IT BE? WHO WOULD MAKE SAKAKI-SAN WAIT?
OKAY, SEE YOU LATER!
I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
HEY! LOOK!
WHAT?
Pop

SO YOU REALLY ARE JUST LIKE EVERYONE SAYS, RIO.
LET'S GO.
UM... I...
YOU WEREN'T THAT LATE AFTER ALL
YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AT ALL
LATER.
THAT'S RIGHT.
.. I KNOW THE TRUTH.

I CAN TELL EVERYONE ABOUT THE SCARS ON YOUR WRISTS, YOU KNOW!
I KNOW WHY YOU ALWAYS WEAR THE LONG-SLEEVED UNIFORM, EVEN DURING SUMMER AND DURING GYM CLASS.
WELL? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU THAT I LOVE YOU?
IS THAT A THREAT?
AND HERE I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT YOU'RE SO PROUD.

ピエタ I

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS, IT'S REALLY NOTHING.
YOU'RE LIKE A DEVIL.
I AM A DEVIL
DO YOU HATE DEVILS?

FINE, DON'T...
YOU COMING OR NOT?

I HEARD THE SOUND OF WAVES BREAKING SOMEWHERE

IN THE DARKNESS.

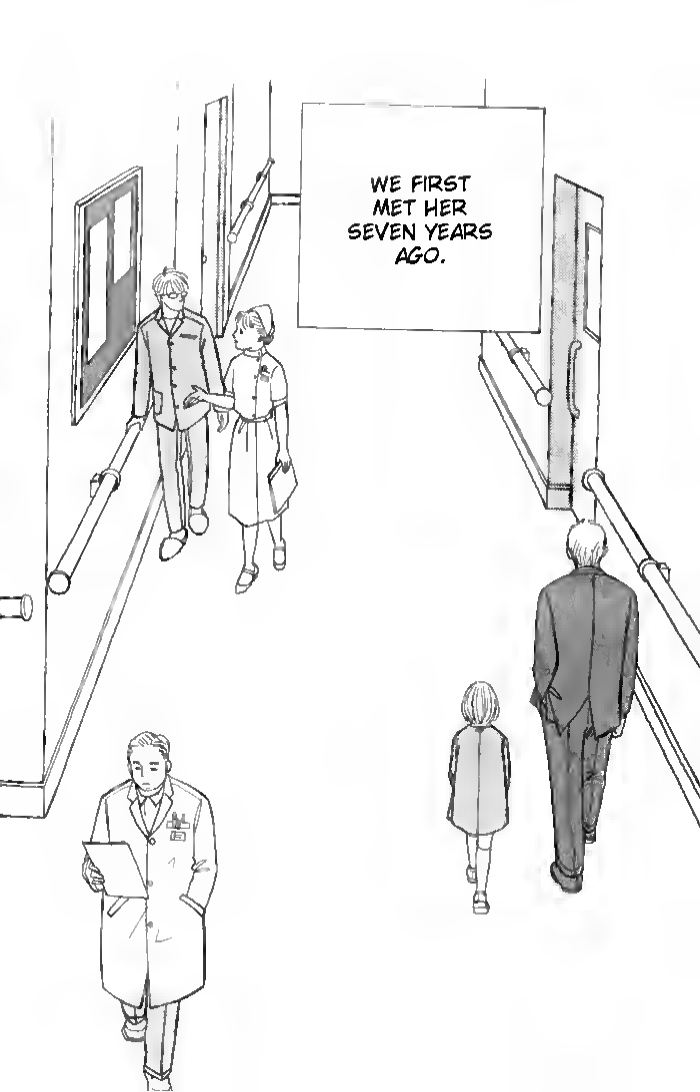
DO YOU REMEMBER?

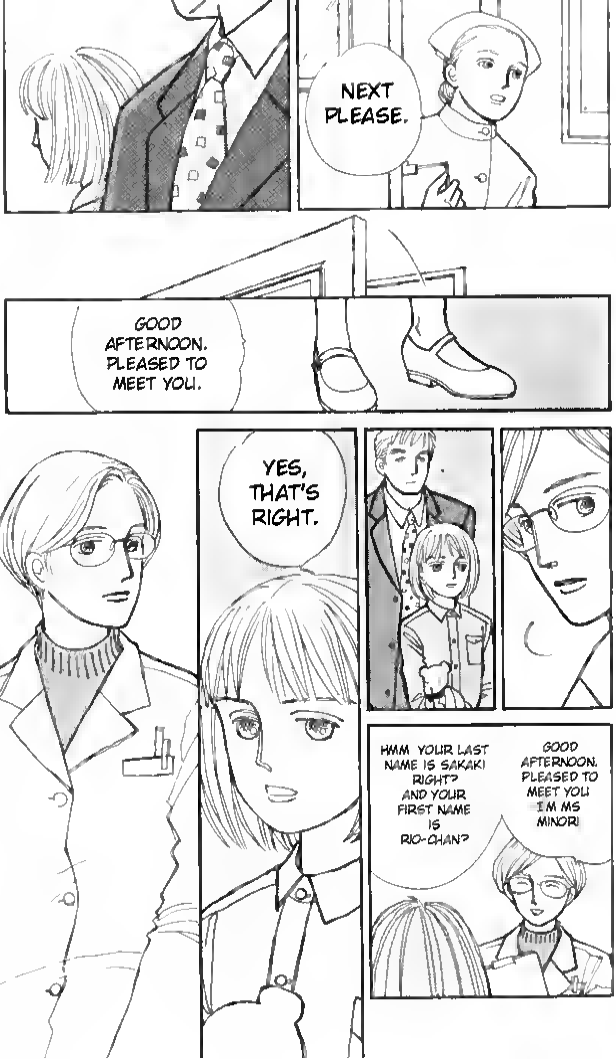
THAT SOUND,

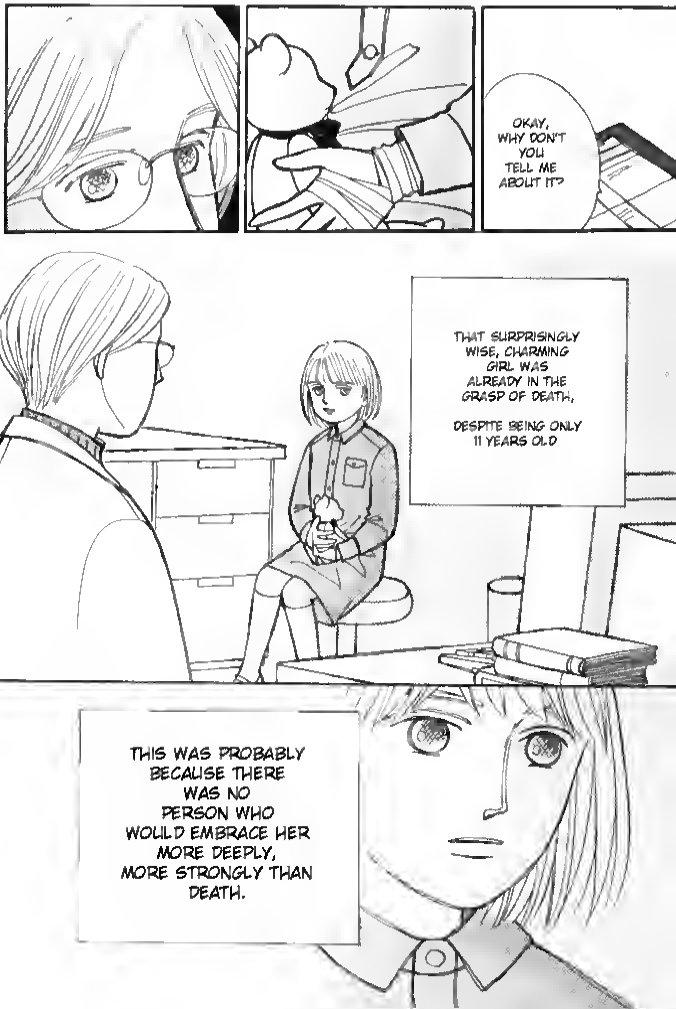
THAT TENDER SCALE REPEATING

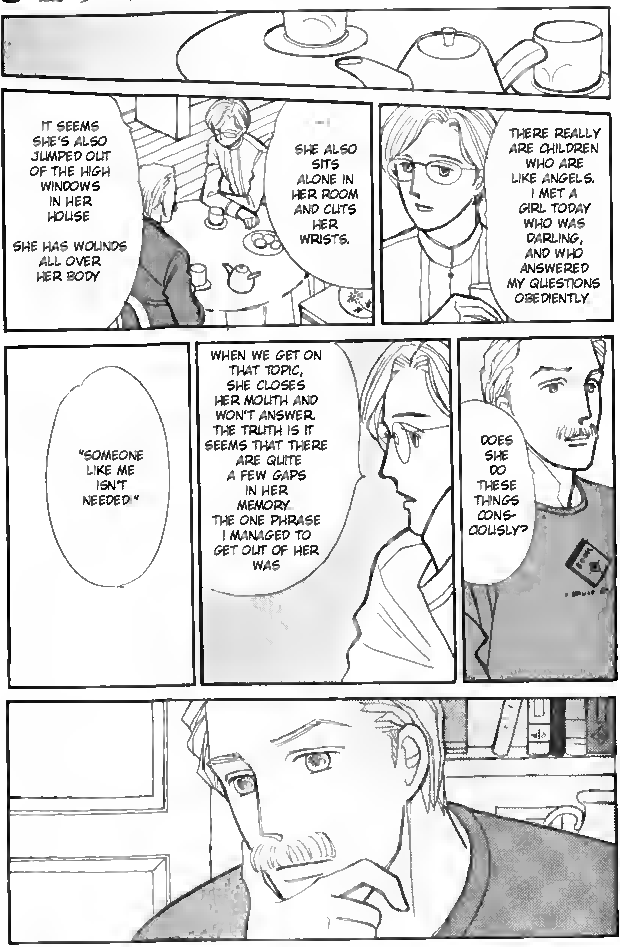
「PIETA #1」 —END—

ピエタ
—pietà—
#2

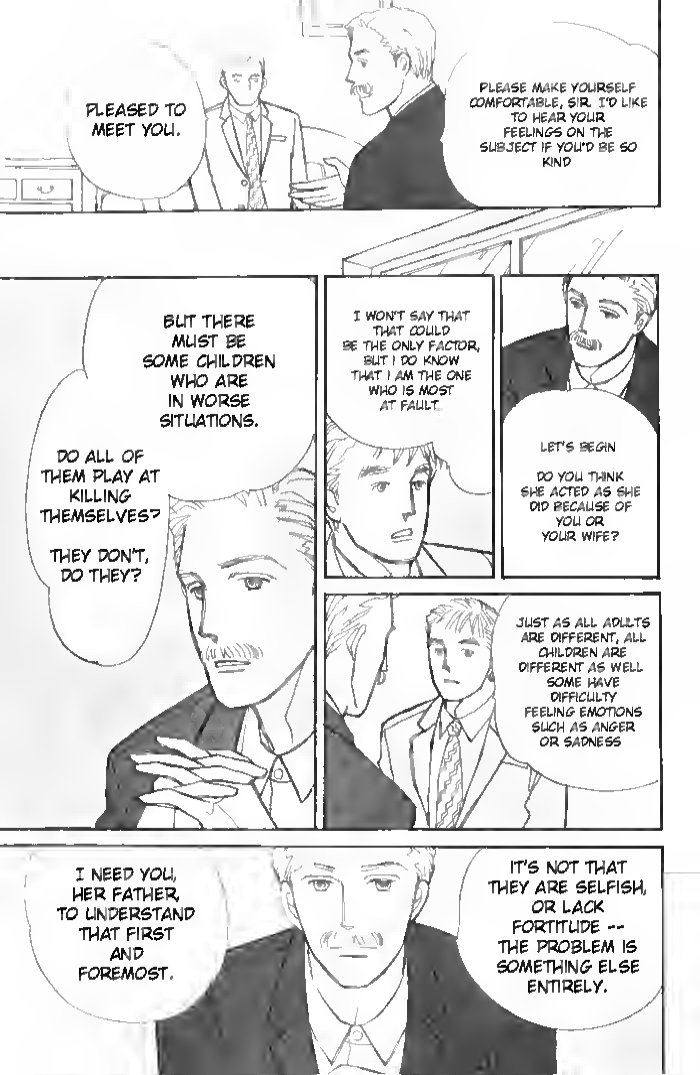

WE FIRST
MET HER
SEVEN YEARS
AGO.


NEXT PLEASE.
GOOD AFTERNOON. PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
HMM YOUR LAST NAME IS SAKAKI RIGHT? AND YOUR FIRST NAME IS RIO-CHAN?
GOOD AFTERNOON. PLEASED TO MEET YOU. I'M MS MINORI


OKAY, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT?
THAT SURPRISINGLY WISE, CHARMING GIRL WAS ALREADY IN THE GRASP OF DEATH,
DESPITE BEING ONLY 11 YEARS OLD
THIS WAS PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE WAS NO PERSON WHO WOULD EMBRACE HER MORE DEEPLY, MORE STRONGLY THAN DEATH.


THERE REALLY ARE CHILDREN WHO ARE LIKE ANGELS. I MET A GIRL TODAY WHO WAS DARLING, AND WHO ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS OBEDIENTLY
SHE ALSO SITS ALONE IN HER ROOM AND CUTS HER WRISTS.
IT SEEMS SHE'S ALSO JUMPED OUT OF THE HIGH WINDOWS IN HER HOUSE
SHE HAS WOUNDS ALL OVER HER BODY
DOES SHE DO THESE THINGS CONSCIOUSLY?
WHEN WE GET ON THAT TOPIC, SHE CLOSES HER MOUTH AND WON'T ANSWER. THE TRUTH IS IT SEEMS THAT THERE ARE QUITE A FEW GAPS IN HER MEMORY. THE ONE PHRASE I MANAGED TO GET OUT OF HER WAS
"SOMEONE LIKE ME ISN'T NEEDED."

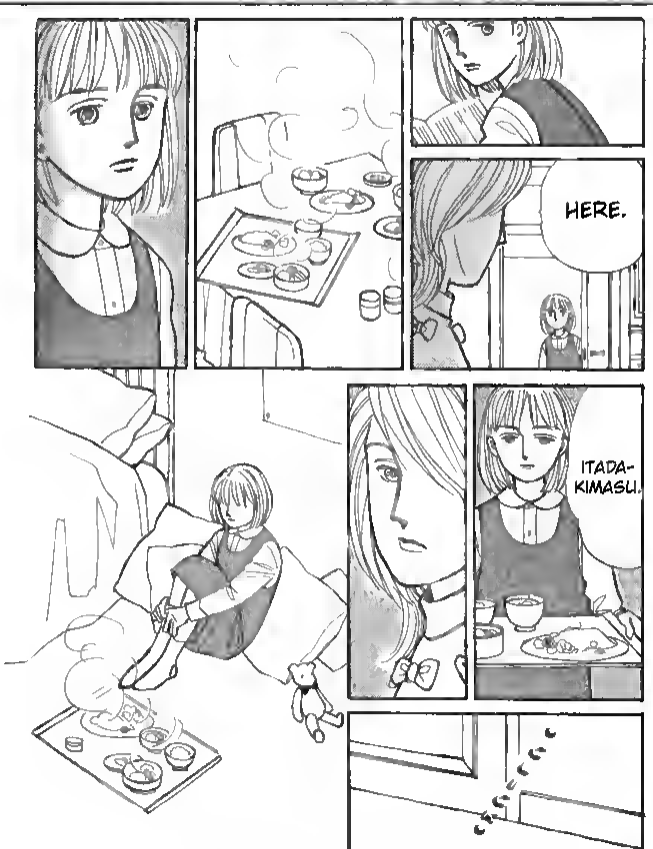
DESPITE BEING ONLY 11, SHE HAS A HISTORY OF LOSING PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAR TO HER.
HER FATHER HATED HER MOTHER, SEEING HER AS HEARTLESS, BUT RIO, WHO LOVED HER MOTHER SO MUCH, BLAMED HERSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED
AT AGE 7, IT WAS HER SISTER.
AT AGE 10, IT WAS HER MOTHER WHO ABANDONED HER.
IT WAS AROUND THAT TIME THAT SHE BEGAN TO INDULGE IN SELF-MUTILATION.
HER INNER TURMOIL INCREASED SHORTLY AFTER THAT, WHEN HER FATHER MARRIED A PREGNANT YOUNG WOMAN.
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY


PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, SIR. I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR FEELINGS ON THE SUBJECT IF YOU'D BE SO KIND
BUT THERE MUST BE SOME CHILDREN WHO ARE IN WORSE SITUATIONS.
DO ALL OF THEM PLAY AT KILLING THEMSELVES?
THEY DON'T, DO THEY?
I WON'T SAY THAT THAT COULD BE THE ONLY FACTOR, BUT I DO KNOW THAT I AM THE ONE WHO IS MOST AT FAULT.
LET'S BEGIN
DO YOU THINK SHE ACTED AS SHE DID BECAUSE OF YOU OR YOUR WIFE?
JUST AS ALL ADULTS ARE DIFFERENT, ALL CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT AS WELL SOME HAVE DIFFICULTY FEELING EMOTIONS SUCH AS ANGER OR SADNESS
I NEED YOU, HER FATHER, TO UNDERSTAND THAT FIRST AND FOREMOST.
IT'S NOT THAT THEY ARE SELFISH, OR LACK FORTITUDE -- THE PROBLEM IS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.

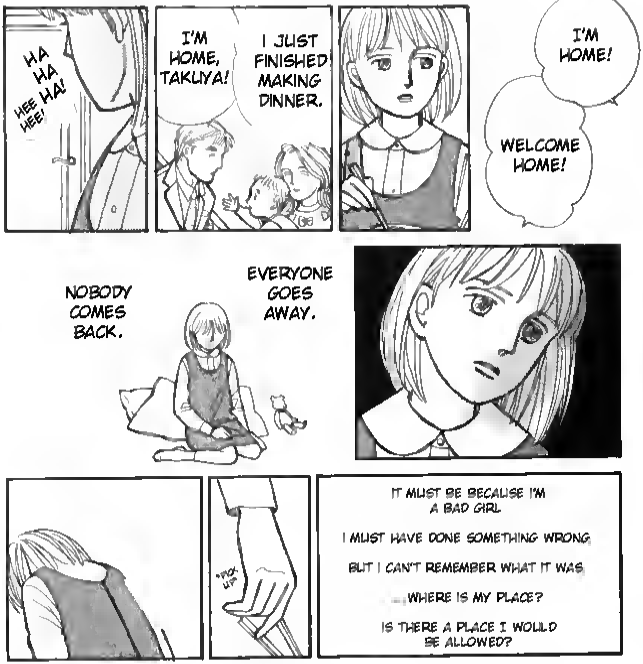
FOR A WHILE NOW I HAVE BEEN UNSURE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT I REALLY AM HER BIOLOGICAL FATHER.
IT'S NOT FAIR TO HER BUT I JUST CAN'T LOVE HER.
I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD TELL YOU THIS, DOCTOR, BUT
DOCTOR PLEASE! FIND SOME WAY TO FIX HER!
UNLIKE MY PAST WIFE, MY CURRENT WIFE IS VERY FAMILY-ORIENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME I FEEL LIKE I HAVE A FAMILY OF MY OWN. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT
...
THE WAY ONE FIXES A BROKEN MACHINE?
THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS. I CAN ONLY SHOW YOU THE PATH. YOU HAVE TO WALK DOWN IT YOURSELVES.
EVEN THOUGH WE REPEATED THAT MANY TIMES, HER FATHER WOULDN'T LISTEN. AND SO WE LOST HOPE LITTLE BY LITTLE, UNTIL WE GAVE UP ON THE FATHER ENTIRELY

WELCOME!
LET'S BAKE COOKIES TODAY AND HAVE TEA ON THE VERANDA.
GOOD AFTERNOON. PLEASE FORGIVE THE INTRUSION.
BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN OF OUR OWN, SHE WAS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR US
WE KNEW WE WERE ACTING IN A FASHION INAPPROPRIATE FOR HER DOCTORS, BUT WE WERE SO HAPPY
ON DAYS SHE HAD FREE, WE WOULD INVITE HER OVER FOR AN AFTERNOON
THE THREE OF US WOULD HAVE A MODEST, HOME-COOKED MEAL AND LISTEN TO MUSIC TOGETHER.
IT WAS THERE THAT OUR FAILURE BEGAN
INCREDIBLE, ISN'T IT?
WE SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE DETAILS SOON
BUT WHAT ABOUT RIO-CHAN?
BOTH OF US?!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! AND I HAD COMPLETELY GIVEN UP ON THE IDEA!
YES, IT'S PROFESSOR WOLLES' SEMINAR. WE APPLIED A YEAR AGO, REMEMBER? WELL THE NOTICE FROM THE FOUNDATION JUST GOT HERE AND BOTH OF US ARE ACCEPTED!
AMERICA?

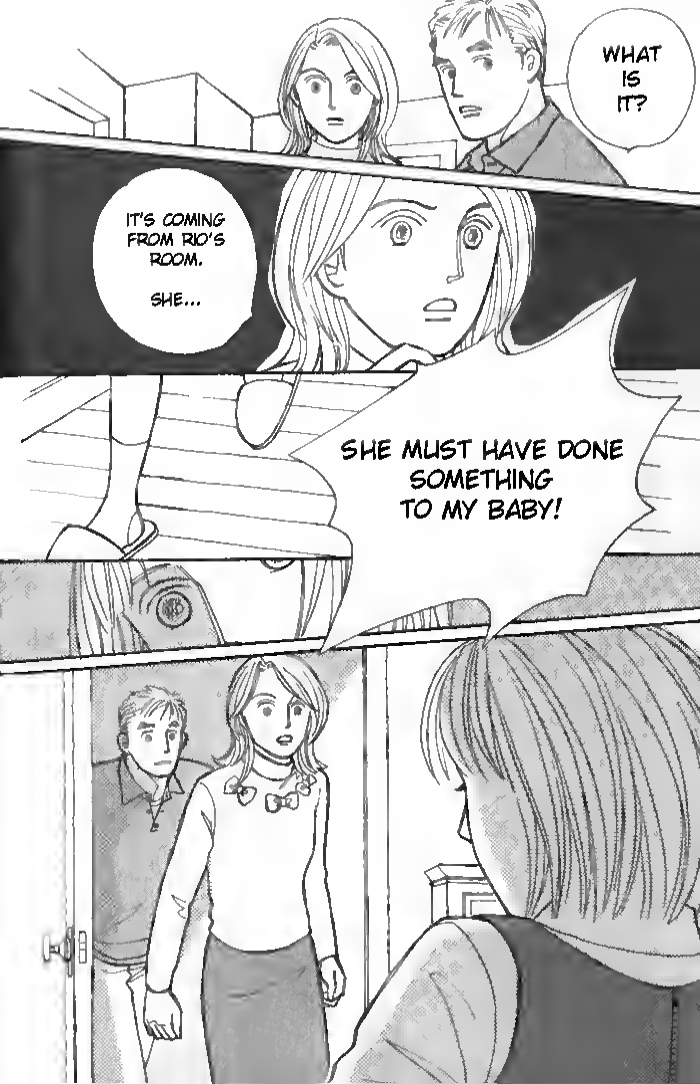
BUT IN THE END WE DECIDED TO GO...
SHE SAW US OFF WITH A SMILE AND ALTHOUGH WE KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING DARK LURKING BENEATH THAT SMILE,
AT FIRST, WE WERE GOOD ABOUT KEEPING IN TOUCH, BUT THAT DIDN'T LAST FOR LONG. WHEN WE CALLED HER FATHER WOULD JUST TELL US THAT EVERYTHING WAS FINE, THAT WE SHOULDN'T WORRY. WE ASKED A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS AN ASSISTANT AT THE HOSPITAL TO CHECK UP ON HER FOR US
HIS NEWS WAS SHOCKING
WE ENDED UP DOING THE SAME THING TO HER THAT HER PARENTS DID.
X HOSPITAL?!
THAT CAN'T BE!
OH NO...
THEY PUT HER IN X HOSPITAL, QUITE A WHILE AGO.
IT SEEMS HER FATHER FORCED HER TO GO THERE.
BUT WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED?
THAT HOSPITAL HAD A HORRIBLE REPUTATION THAT EVERYONE IN THE BUSINESS KNEW ABOUT
IN FACT, IT WAS CLOSED A YEAR LATER BECAUSE OF THE MANY ABUSES REPORTED THERE
ANYHOW, I'M GOING BACK FOR A BIT
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER THERE



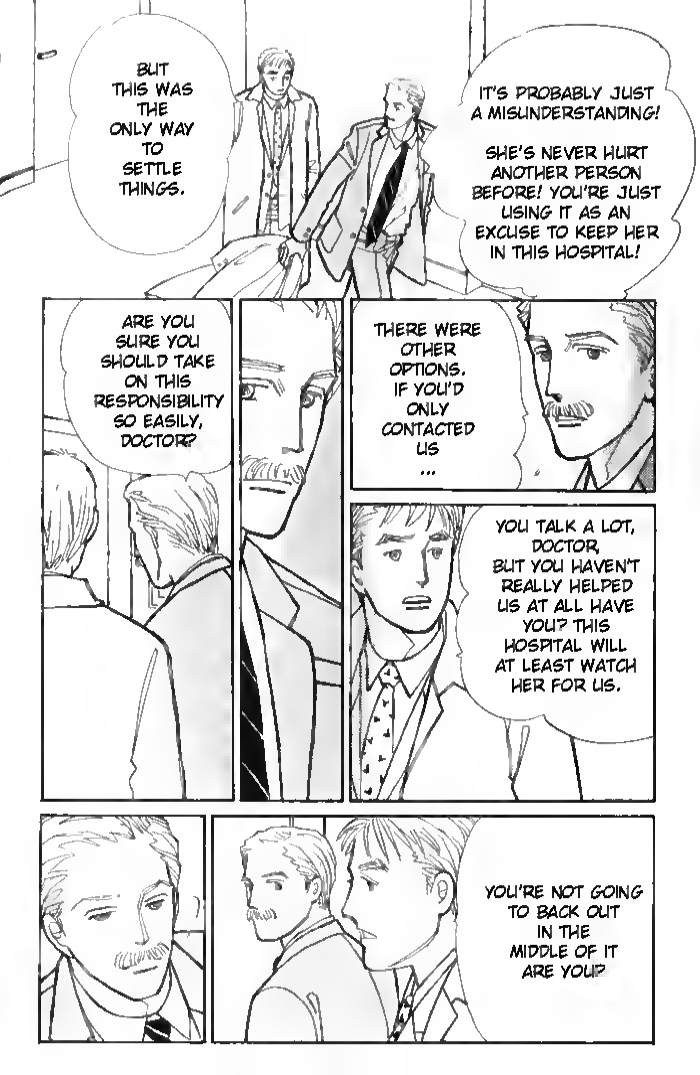
~NOTE ITADAKIMASU - A RITUAL EXPRESSION SAID BEFORE EATING ~


HA HA HA! HEE HEE!
I'M HOME, TAKUYA!
I JUST FINISHED MAKING DINNER.
I'M HOME!
WELCOME HOME!
NOBODY COMES BACK.
EVERYONE GOES AWAY.
PICK UP
IT MUST BE BECAUSE I'M A BAD GIRL
I MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING WRONG
BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS
...WHERE IS MY PLACE?
IS THERE A PLACE I WOULD BE ALLOWED?

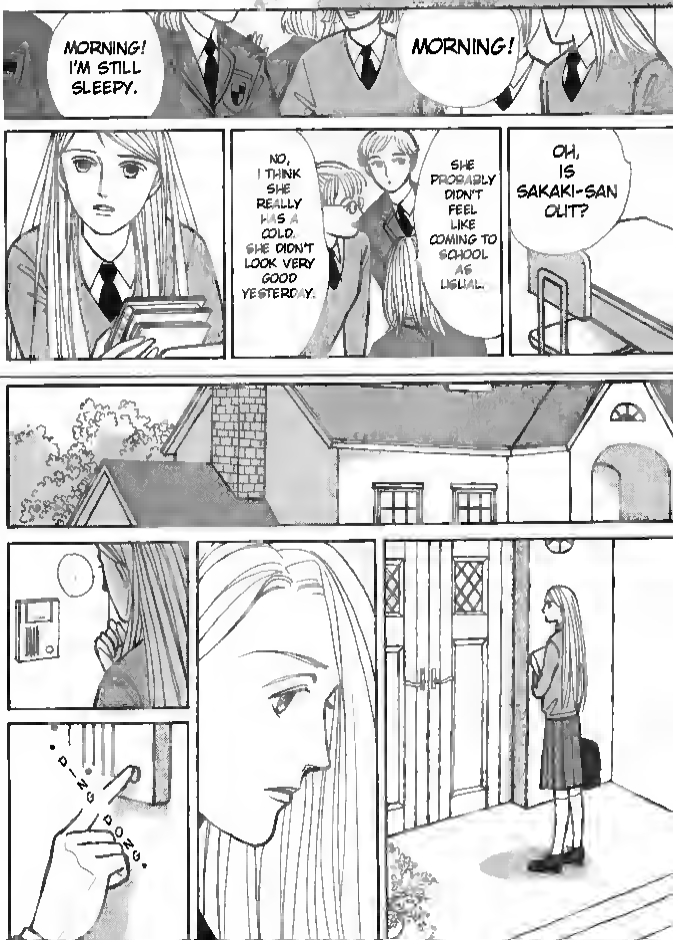
AH!
ABCD
STAY AWAY, TAKKUN!
AH
ABCD
SNIFF SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
BONK!
?!
ABCD
SLIP
*WAA
AAH!

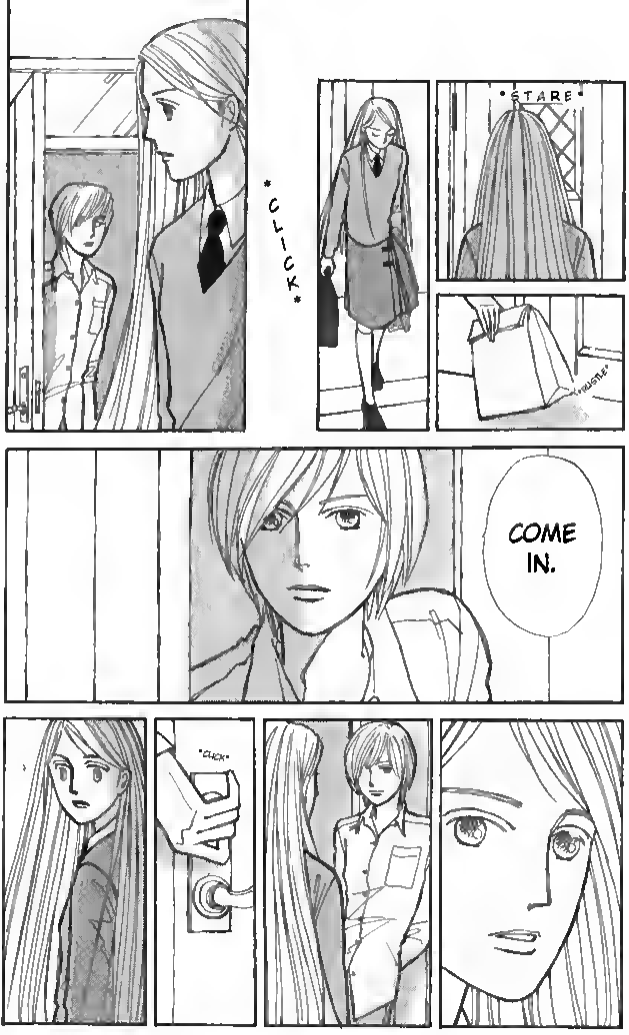

WHAT IS IT?
IT'S COMING FROM RIO'S ROOM.
SHE...
SHE MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO MY BABY!

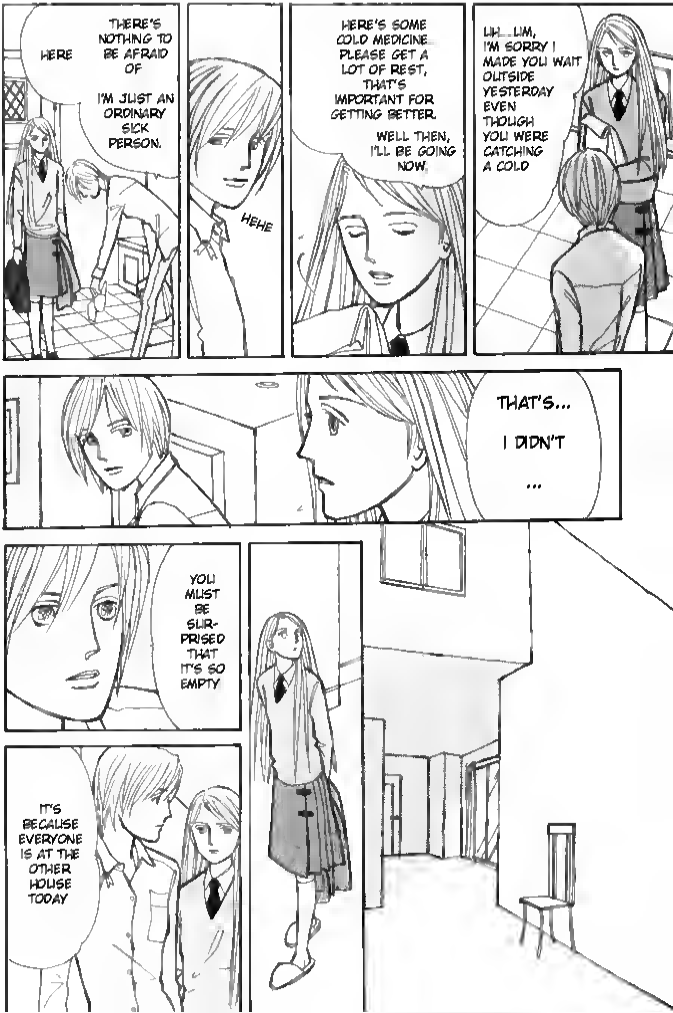
QUICK FIND A HOSPITAL, DEAR!
I DON'T CARE WHERE IT IS,
AS LONG AS THEY'LL TAKE HER!
FOR THE TIME BEING, JUST KEEP HER AWAY FROM US!
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO SEE HER FACE!


BUT THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SETTLE THINGS.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST A MISUNDERSTANDING!
SHE'S NEVER HURT ANOTHER PERSON BEFORE! YOU'RE JUST USING IT AS AN EXCUSE TO KEEP HER IN THIS HOSPITAL!
ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD TAKE ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY SO EASILY, DOCTOR?
THERE WERE OTHER OPTIONS. IF YOU'D ONLY CONTACTED US ...
YOU TALK A LOT, DOCTOR, BUT YOU HAVEN'T REALLY HELPED US AT ALL HAVE YOU? THIS HOSPITAL WILL AT LEAST WATCH HER FOR US.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BACK OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ARE YOU?

...
DOCTOR?
RIO-KUN!!
302
WELCOME BACK.
SITTING THERE IN THAT BED WAS A GIRL I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE.

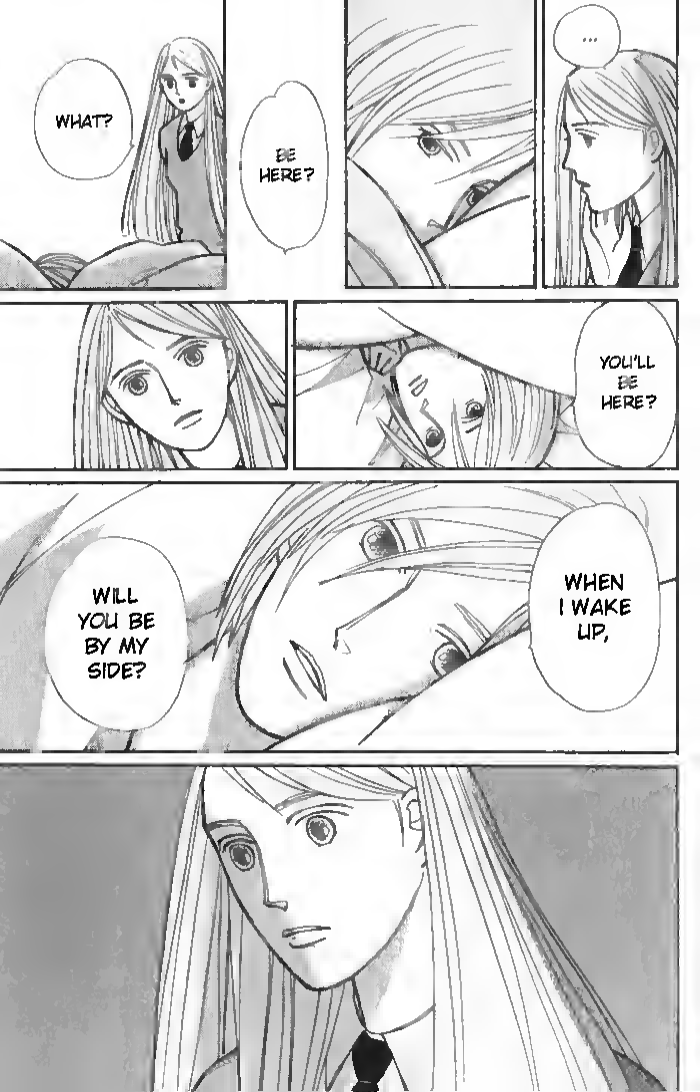

MORNING!
I'M STILL SLEEPY.
MORNING!
OH, IS SAKAKI-SAN OUT?
SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T FEEL LIKE COMING TO SCHOOL AS USUAL.
NO, I THINK SHE REALLY HAS A COLD. SHE DIDN'T LOOK VERY GOOD YESTERDAY.
DING DONG.


CLICK
STARE
RUSTLE
COME IN.
CLICK


LIH...LIM, I'M SORRY I MADE YOU WAIT OUTSIDE YESTERDAY EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE CATCHING A COLD
HERE'S SOME COLD MEDICINE. PLEASE GET A LOT OF REST, THAT'S IMPORTANT FOR GETTING BETTER.
WELL THEN, I'LL BE GOING NOW.
HEHE
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF
I'M JUST AN ORDINARY SICK PERSON.
HERE
THAT'S... I DIDN'T ...
YOU MUST BE SURPRISED THAT IT'S SO EMPTY
IT'S BECAUSE EVERYONE IS AT THE OTHER HOUSE TODAY

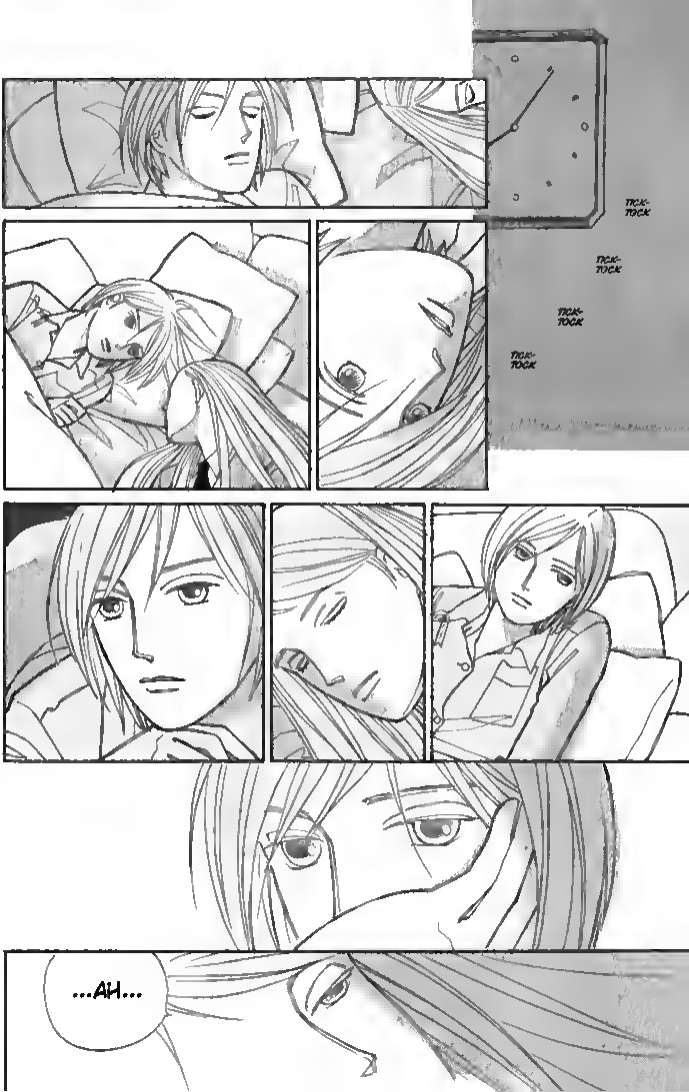
I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD THE GOSSIP ABOUT MY FAMILY.
THIS IS A COLD MEDICINE I'VE TAKEN BEFORE.
IT SEEMS TO WORK PRETTY WELL.
IT WILL MAKE YOU SLEEPY SO YOU SHOULD SLEEP WELL.
WHEN YOU WAKE UP YOU SHOULD FEEL A LITTLE BETTER.
I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP.
WHY NOT?
I HAVE NIGHT-MARES.
BUT YOU SHOULD TRY TO SLEEP ANYWAY, BECAUSE YOU HAVE A FEVER. IF YOU DON'T SLEEP YOU WON'T GET ANY BETTER.
I DON'T CARE IF I DON'T GET BETTER.
SAKAKI-SAN, YOU'RE SORT OF
HMM?
NOTHING.
"STARE"

YOU MIGHT GET A STOMACH-ACHE IF YOU DON'T.
SEE? IT'S WRITTEN RIGHT HERE ON THE BOX.
WHAT?
AH! IF YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THOSE YOU SHOULD EAT SOMETHING FIRST.
"POUR"
HOW DID YOU EVER MANAGE BEFORE?
HMM.
"RUSTLE"
...
CAN'T REMEMBER
...
...
I'M SLEEPY
...
"SHIFT"
WHAT?
IT'S WORKING ALREADY?!
YEAH
SOMEHOW


WHAT?
BE HERE?
...
YOU'LL BE HERE?
WHEN I WAKE UP,
WILL YOU BE BY MY SIDE?

HEHE
OKAY.
I HOPE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY NIGHTMARES.

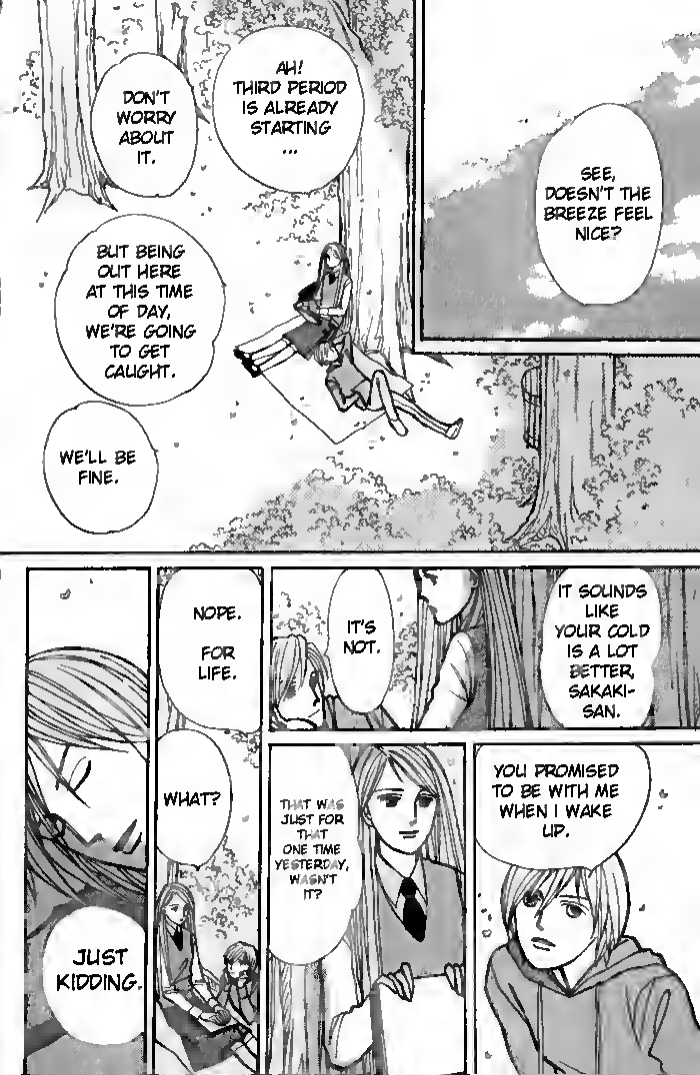
"WE'RE HAVING THE SAME DREAM."
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT DURING THE DREAM.


TICK-TOCK
TICK-TOCK
TICK-TOCK
TICK-TOCK
...AH...

I HAVE TO GO HOME
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT HAD GOTTEN SO LATE!
HELLO?
I'M STAYING WITH MY AUNT.
SHE'LL WORRY IF I'M LATE.
THANKS,
SEE YOU LATER.
BE SURE TO TAKE THE MEDICINE!

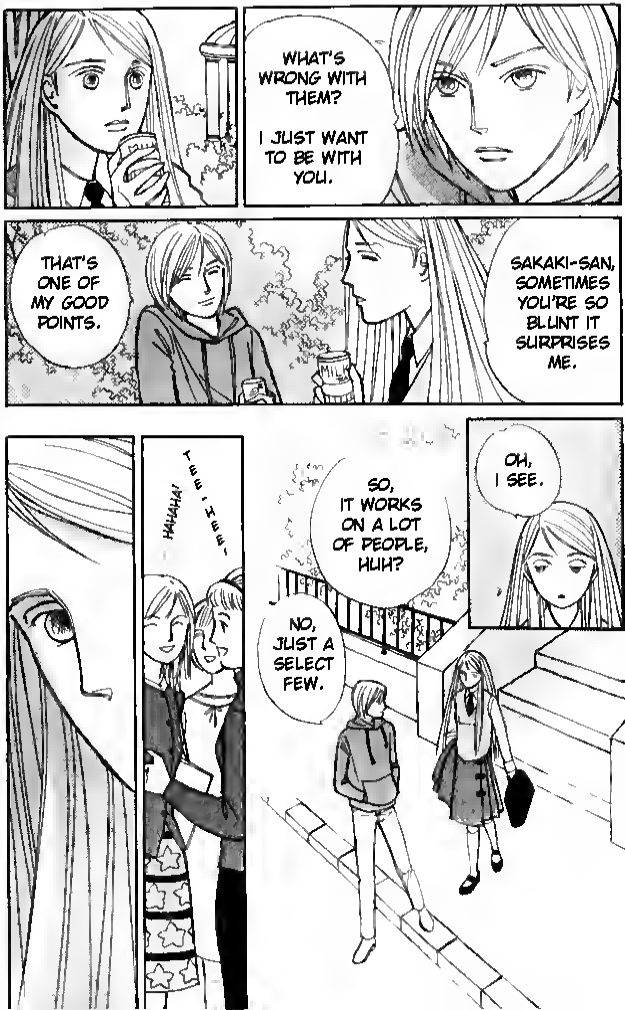
FOR STAYING WITH ME.
I'LL STOP BY TOMORROW MORNING, TOO.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

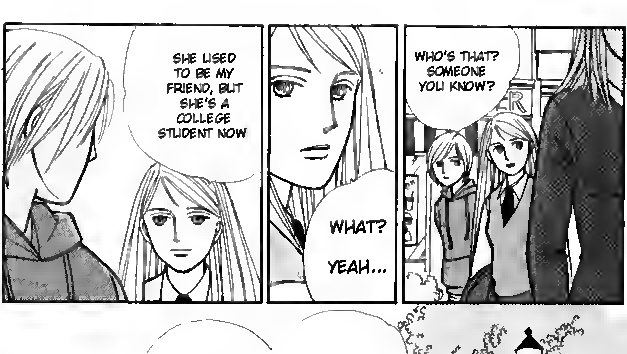
HIGA-SAN!
HERE!
NOMIYA-SAN!
HIGA-SAN? IS SHE OUT TODAY?
"WHISPER-WHISPER"
SAKAKI-SAN AND HIGA-SAN ARE ABSENT TODAY.
NO WAY.
I'M ALREADY LATE AS IT IS.
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT.
NO!
LET'S GO FOR A WALK.
IT'S PRETTY NICE OUT.
OKAY, BUT IN THAT CASE YOU SHOULD GO HOME AND GET SOME SLEEP.
WHY --
THANKS AGAIN FOR YESTERDAY
I STILL HAVE A BIT OF A FEVER, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF ME?


AH! THIRD PERIOD IS ALREADY STARTING ...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SEE, DOESN'T THE BREEZE FEEL NICE?
BUT BEING OUT HERE AT THIS TIME OF DAY, WE'RE GOING TO GET CAUGHT.
WE'LL BE FINE.
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR COLD IS A LOT BETTER, SAKAKI-SAN.
IT'S NOT.
YOU PROMISED TO BE WITH ME WHEN I WAKE UP.
THAT WAS JUST FOR THAT ONE TIME YESTERDAY, WASN'T IT?
NOPE. FOR LIFE.
WHAT?
JUST KIDDING.

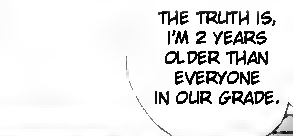
I JUST THOUGHT I'D GO GET SOMETHING TO DRINK.
LET GO SAKAKI-SAN! AH, YOU STARTLED ME!
WHAT A PAIN.
?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
ROUGH
DO YOU WANT SOMETHING TOO? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE SAKAKI-SAN?
COFFEE
OKAY.
I'M JUST GOING TO THAT VENDING MACHINE OVER THERE.
YOU'RE GOING TO COME BACK?

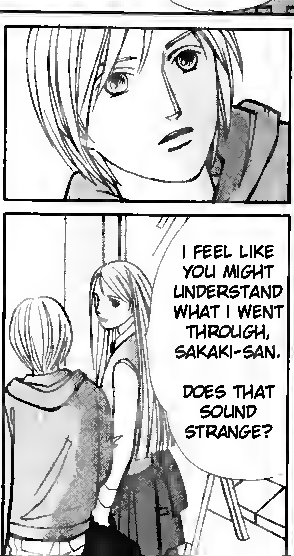
IT WILL BE ALRIGHT.
SHE SAID SHE'D COME RIGHT BACK.
SLOW.
SLOW.
HERE.
CARROT JUICE?
IT WAS ALL OUT OF COFFEE.
CAROTENE IS BETTER THAN CAFFEINE! IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH VITAMINS, YOU'LL GET SICK MORE EASILY
WELL, IF I DRINK THIS, WILL YOU SPEND THE REST OF THE DAY WITH ME?
THOSE TERMS SOUND SORT OF SELFISH.


WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM?
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU.
THAT'S ONE OF MY GOOD POINTS.
SAKAKI-SAN, SOMETIMES YOU'RE SO BLUNT IT SURPRISES ME.
OH, I SEE.
SO, IT WORKS ON A LOT OF PEOPLE, HUH?
NO, JUST A SELECT FEW.
HAHAHA!
HEH HEH~

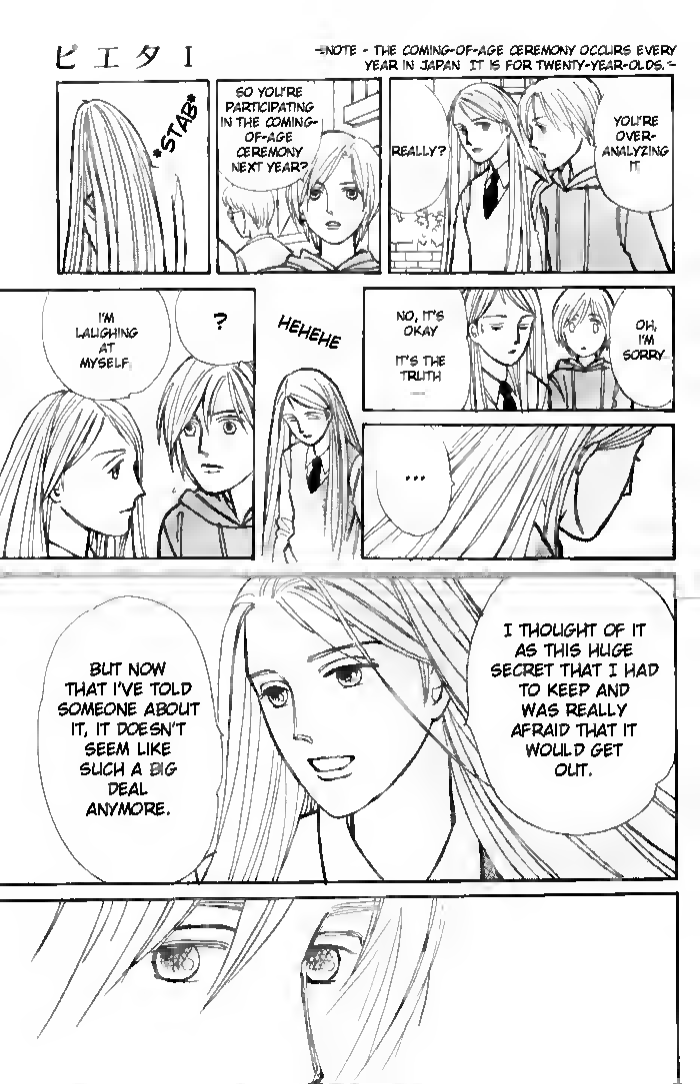

SHE USED TO BE MY FRIEND, BUT SHE'S A COLLEGE STUDENT NOW
WHAT?
YEAH...
WHO'S THAT? SOMEONE YOU KNOW?

I'M BEHIND IN SCHOOL.
THE TRUTH IS, I'M 2 YEARS OLDER THAN EVERYONE IN OUR GRADE.



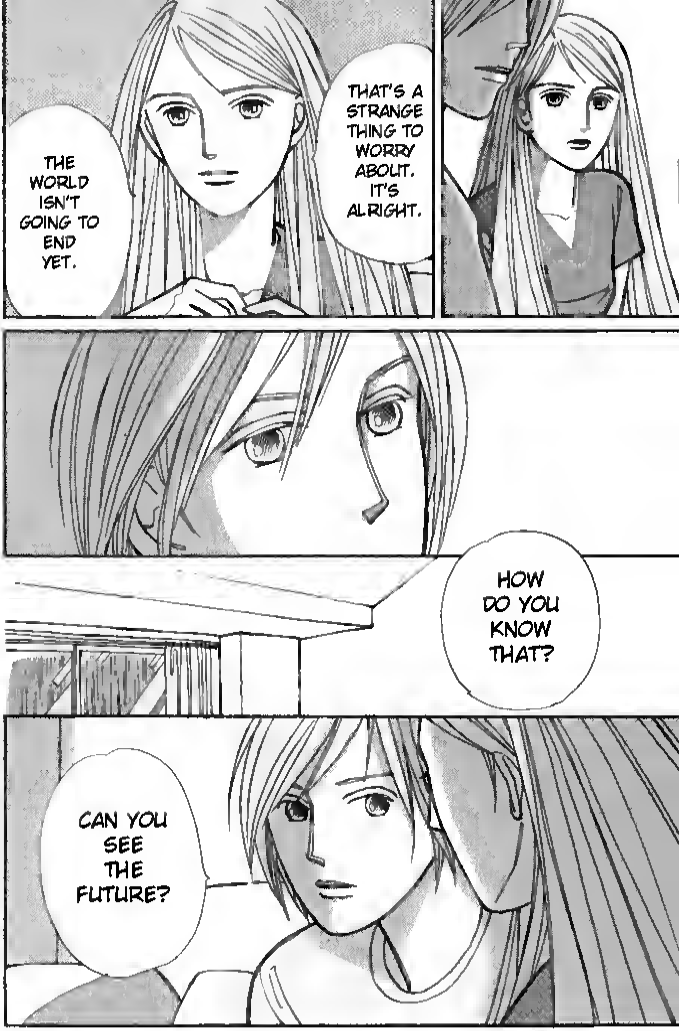

I FEEL LIKE YOU MIGHT UNDERSTAND WHAT I WENT THROUGH, SAKAKI-SAN.
DOES THAT SOUND STRANGE?

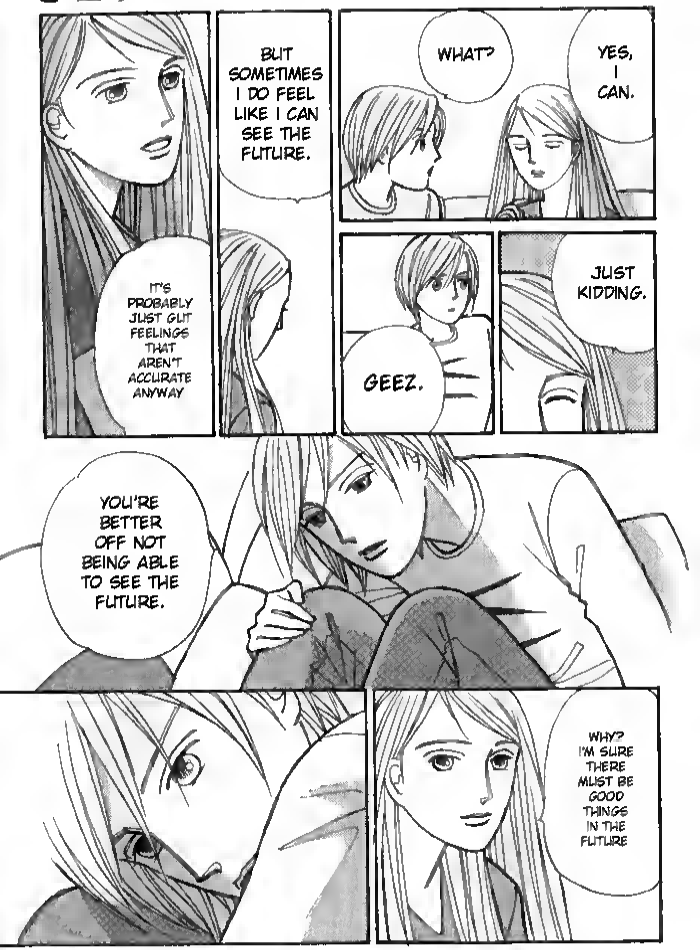
WHEN I WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I HAD SOME MENTAL PROBLEMS THAT KEPT ME FROM LEAVING THE HOUSE FOR A WHILE.
I WENT TO A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL AT FIRST, BUT THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO KNEW ABOUT ME AND I FELT INFERIOR TO THEM SO IT DIDN'T REALLY GO WELL.
BECAUSE OF THAT I APPLIED TO THE SCHOOL HERE

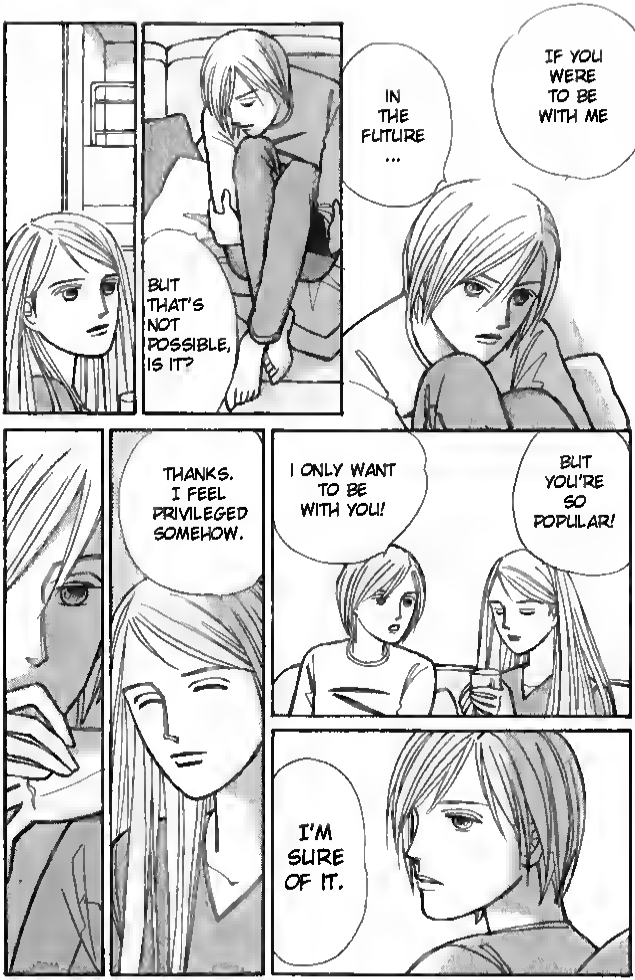

~NOTE - THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY OCCURS EVERY YEAR IN JAPAN. IT IS FOR TWENTY-YEAR-OLDS.~
STAB
SO YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY NEXT YEAR?
REALLY?
YOU'RE OVER-ANALYZING IT.
I'M LAUGHING AT MYSELF.
?
HEHEHE
NO, IT'S OKAY
IT'S THE TRUTH
OH, I'M SORRY.
...
I THOUGHT OF IT AS THIS HUGE SECRET THAT I HAD TO KEEP AND WAS REALLY AFRAID THAT IT WOULD GET OUT.
BUT NOW THAT I'VE TOLD SOMEONE ABOUT IT, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SUCH A BIG DEAL ANYMORE.

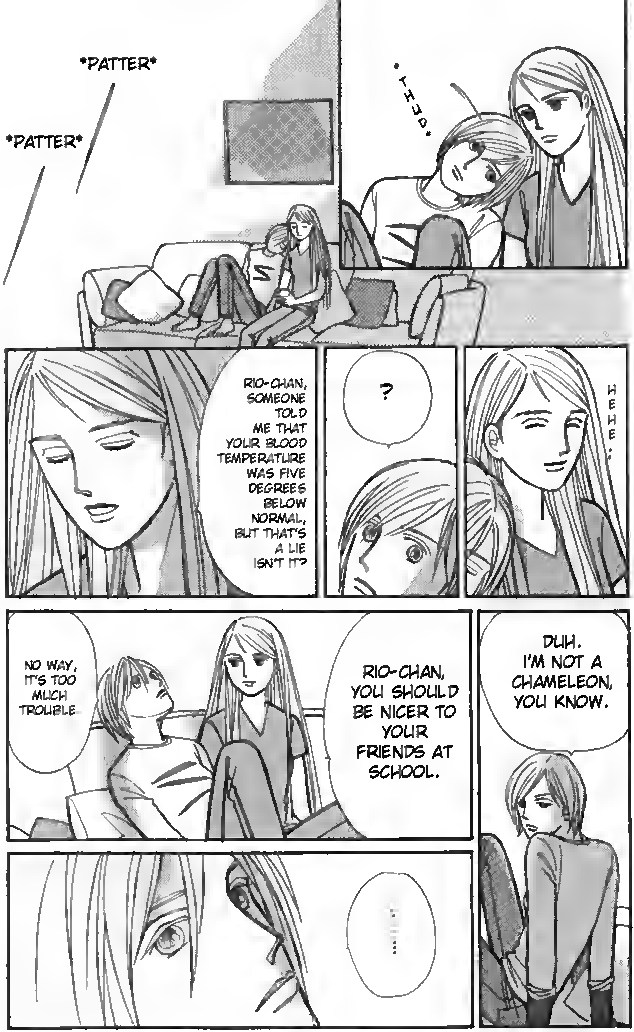
BUT... THOSE TWO THINGS AREN'T REALLY CONNECTED AT ALL.
THAT'S RIGHT. SO IT SHOULDN'T MATTER IF YOU JUST SKIP CLASSES TODAY.
BUT I DRANK THE CARROT JUICE LIKE YOU ASKED!
IF I DRINK CARROT JUICE EVERY DAY, YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND EVERY DAY WITH ME.
I WON'T.
OKAY, I GET IT SO YOU CAN LET GO OF MY HAND
LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN STORM WARNINGS THROUGHOUT THIS PREFECTURE. IN KAWAZOE IN PARTICULAR, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TOLD TO EXERCISE CAUTION.

HEREAFTER, A LARGE AMOUNT OF PRECIPITATION IS EXPECTED IN ALL AREAS, ON THE ORDER OF 10 TO THE 3RD POWER.
I HATE RAIN. AND THE SOUND OF RAIN.
I DON'T HAVE ANY HAPPY MEMORIES OF RAINY DAYS.
I BET IT WILL BE RAINING THE DAY THE WORLD ENDS.

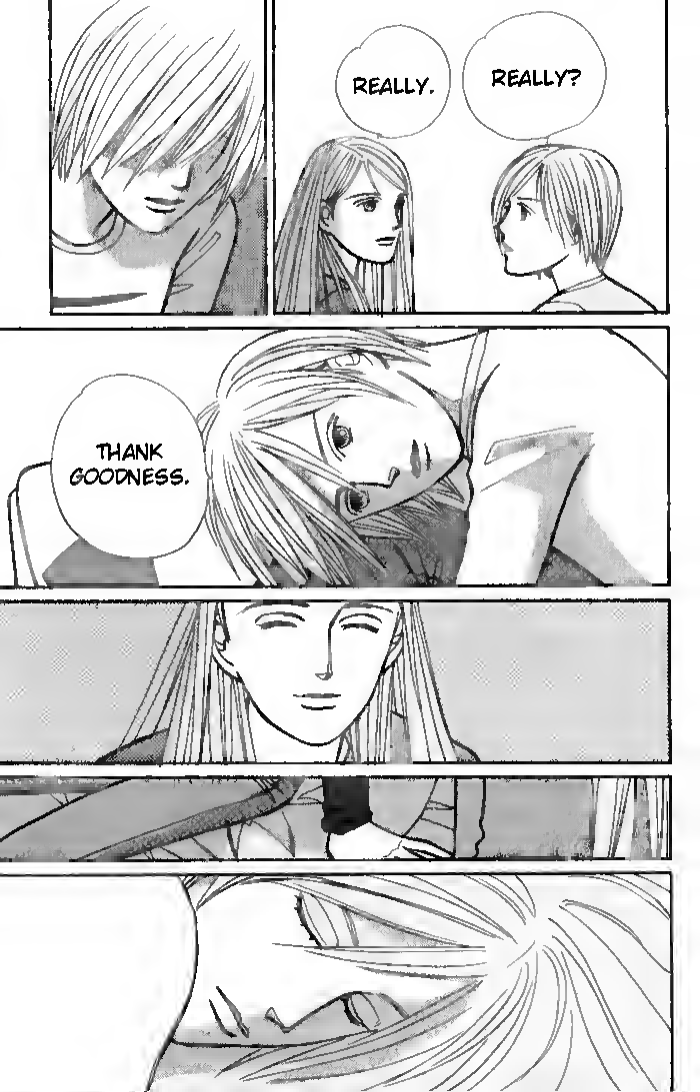

THE WORLD ISN'T GOING TO END YET.
THAT'S A STRANGE THING TO WORRY ABOUT. IT'S ALRIGHT.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
CAN YOU SEE THE FUTURE?

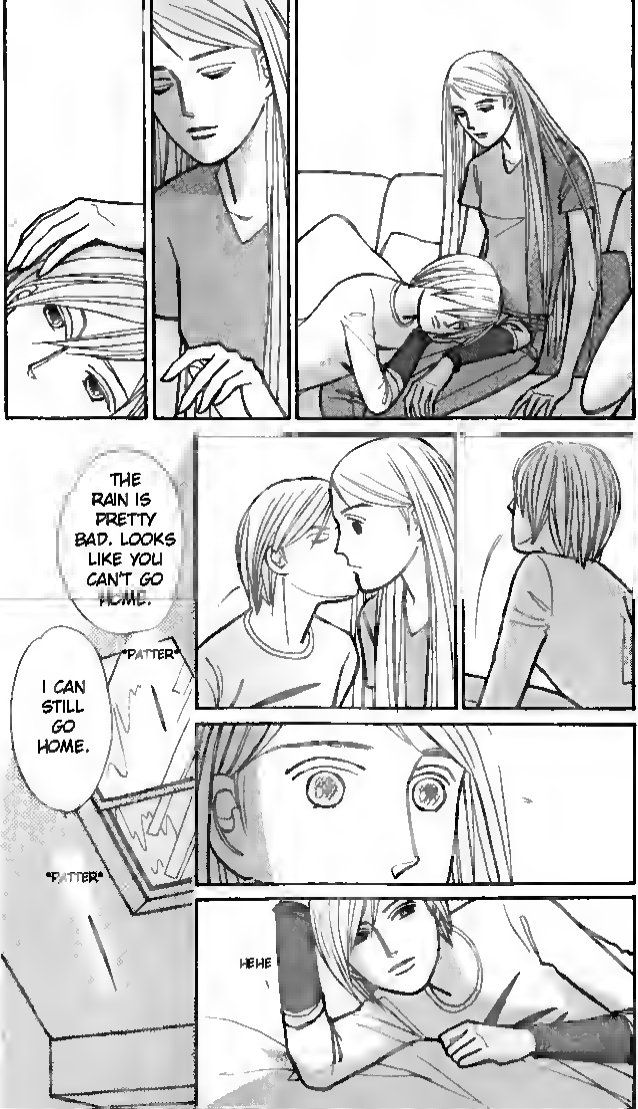

BUT SOMETIMES I DO FEEL LIKE I CAN SEE THE FUTURE.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST GUT FEELINGS THAT AREN'T ACCURATE ANYWAY
WHAT?
YES, I CAN.
GEEZ.
JUST KIDDING.
YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE THE FUTURE.
WHY? I'M SURE THERE MUST BE GOOD THINGS IN THE FUTURE

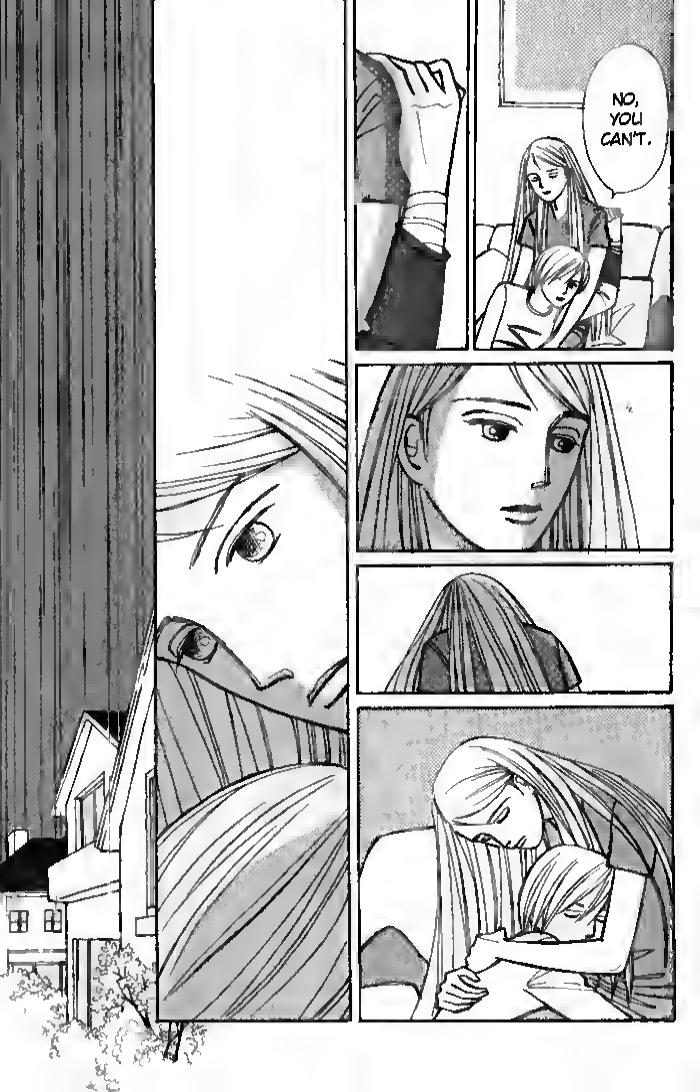

IF YOU WERE TO BE WITH ME
IN THE FUTURE ...
BUT THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, IS IT?
BUT YOU'RE SO POPULAR!
I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU!
THANKS. I FEEL PRIVILEGED SOMEHOW.
I'M SURE OF IT.


PATTER
PATTER
PEEL
RIO-CHAN, SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT YOUR BLOOD TEMPERATURE WAS FIVE DEGREES BELOW NORMAL, BUT THAT'S A LIE ISN'T IT?
?
HEHE.
NO WAY, IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE.
RIO-CHAN, YOU SHOULD BE NICER TO YOUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.
DUH. I'M NOT A CHAMELEON, YOU KNOW.
.....

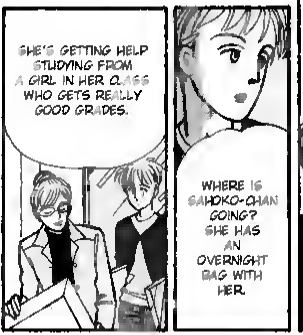
DO YOU LIKE NICE PEOPLE?
YEAH.
THEN I'LL DO IT.
SO LIKE ME A LOT MORE, OKAY?
OKAY.

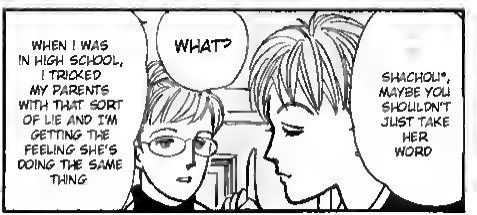

REALLY.
REALLY?
THANK GOODNESS.


THE RAIN IS PRETTY BAD. LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN'T GO HOME.
I CAN STILL GO HOME.
PATTER
PATTER
HEHE

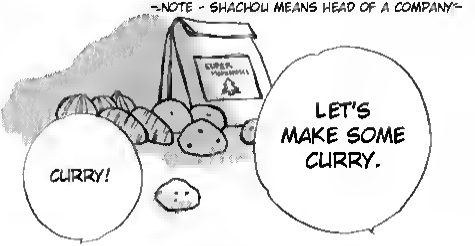

NO, YOU CAN'T.

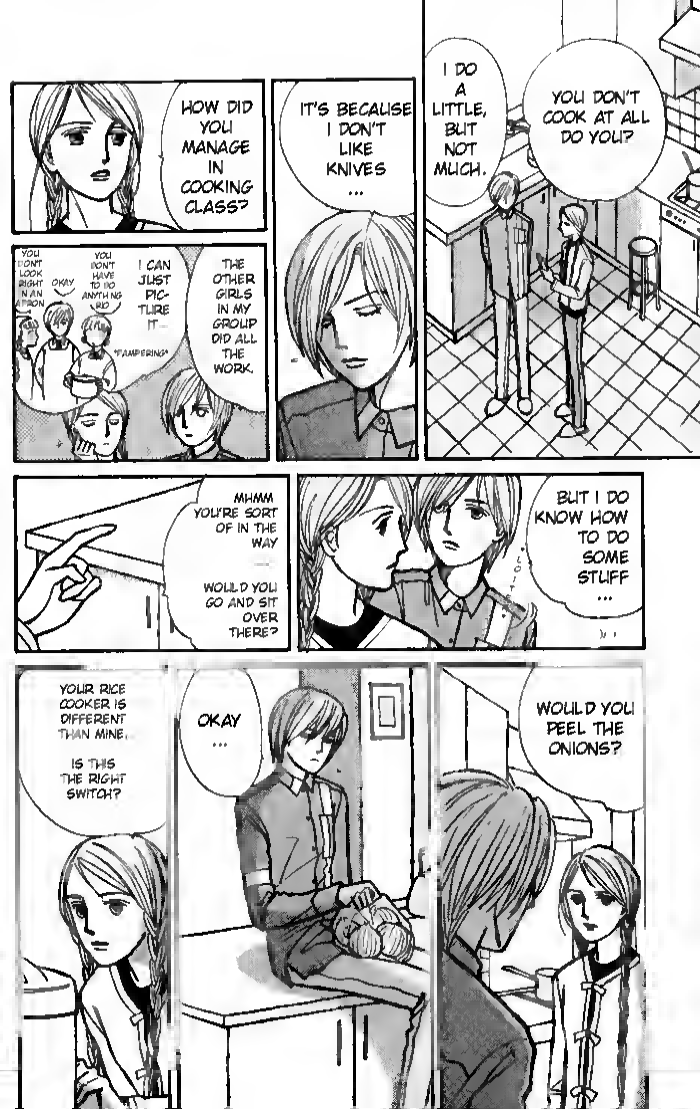
OH, MRS. SAKAKI.
GOOD AFTERNOON.
GOOD AFTERNOON.
REALLY? THAT'S INCREDIBLE!
BUT DOESN'T IT TAKE A LOT OF TIME?
YOU EVEN MAKE ALL YOUR SNACKS BY HAND DON'T YOU, SAKAKI -SAN?
THERE WAS A TIME I WAS CRAZY ABOUT THOSE AS WELL, BUT IT DIDN'T LAST LONG
YES. I'VE COMPARED THEM TO SOME OTHER KINDS, AND THESE ARE THE ONES I TRUST THE MOST
ARE THOSE THE ORGANIC VEGETABLES THAT YOU MAIL-ORDERED?
IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT THAT I FEEL I HAVE TO DO WHATEVER I CAN FOR MY CHILD
THAT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT YOU CAN DO TO INSURE YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE, ISN'T IT?
WELL, THAT CAN'T REALLY BE HELPED. IT'S A PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY, YOU KNOW. DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU UNEASY TO GIVE A CHILD FOOD IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHERE IT WAS MADE? IT CERTAINLY DOES FOR ME
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD MOTHER.
WHAT A GREAT PERSON YOU ARE
I COULD NEVER BE LIKE THAT.
WELL, HAVING CHILDREN IS MY DREAM.


I'M OFF, SEE YOU LATER!
WHERE IS SAHOKO-CHAN GOING? SHE HAS AN OVERNIGHT BAG WITH HER.
SHE'S GETTING HELP STUDYING FROM A GIRL IN HER CLASS WHO GETS REALLY GOOD GRADES.


SHACHOU*, MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T JUST TAKE HER WORD
WHAT?
WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I TRICKED MY PARENTS WITH THAT SORT OF LIE AND I'M GETTING THE FEELING SHE'S DOING THE SAME THING

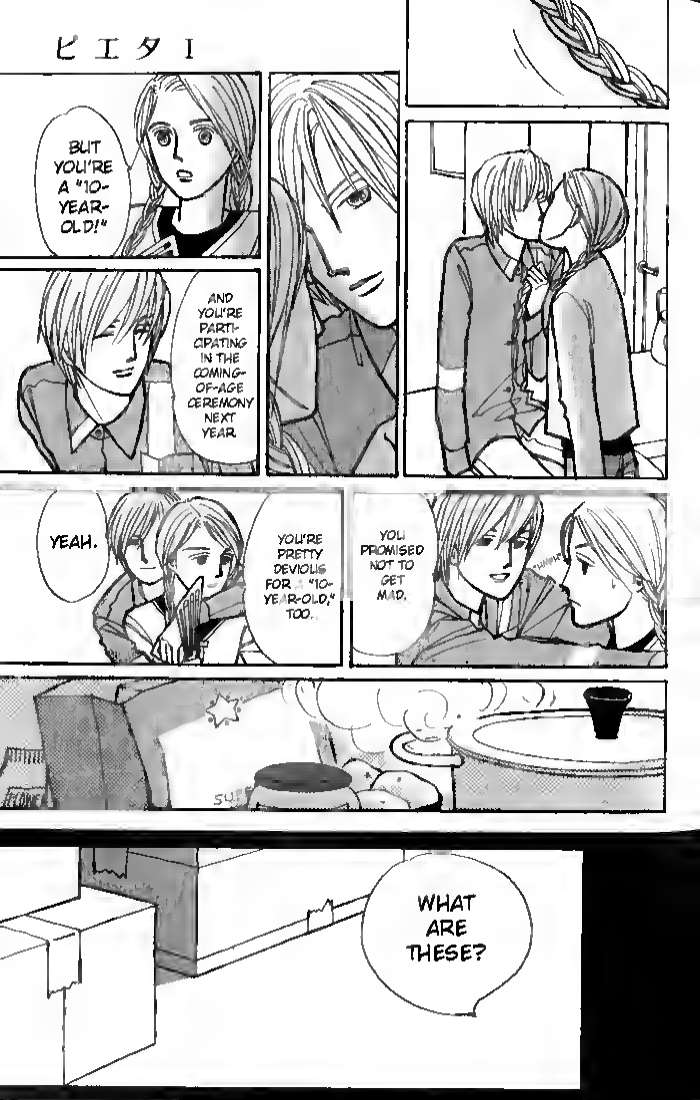
NOTE - SHACHOU MEANS HEAD OF A COMPANY

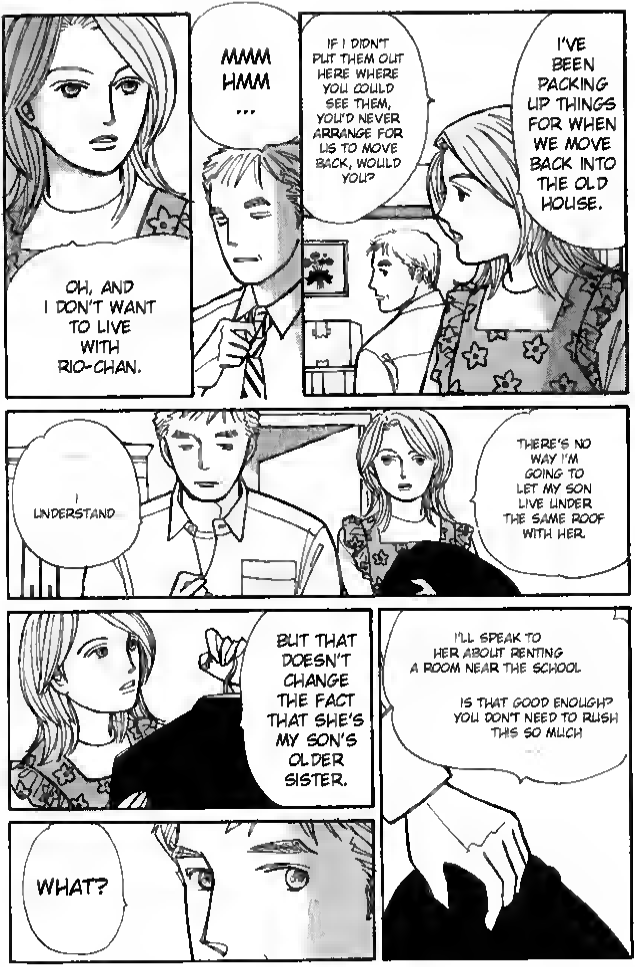


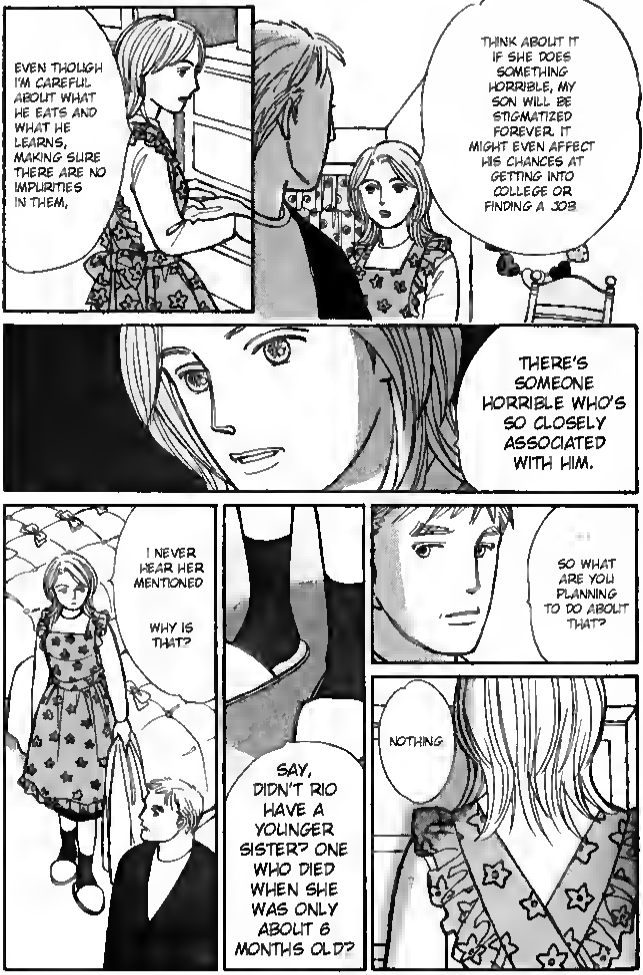

I DO A LITTLE, BUT NOT MUCH.
YOU DON'T COOK AT ALL DO YOU?
IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE KNIVES ...
HOW DID YOU MANAGE IN COOKING CLASS?
THE OTHER GIRLS IN MY GROUP DID ALL THE WORK.
I CAN JUST PICTURE IT—
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING BAD
OKAY
YOU DON'T LOOK RIGHT IN AN APRON
TAMPERING
BUT I DO KNOW HOW TO DO SOME STUFF ...
MHMM YOU'RE SORT OF IN THE WAY — WOULD YOU GO AND SIT OVER THERE?
WOULD YOU PEEL THE ONIONS?
OKAY ...
YOUR RICE COOKER IS DIFFERENT THAN MINE. IS THIS THE RIGHT SWITCH?

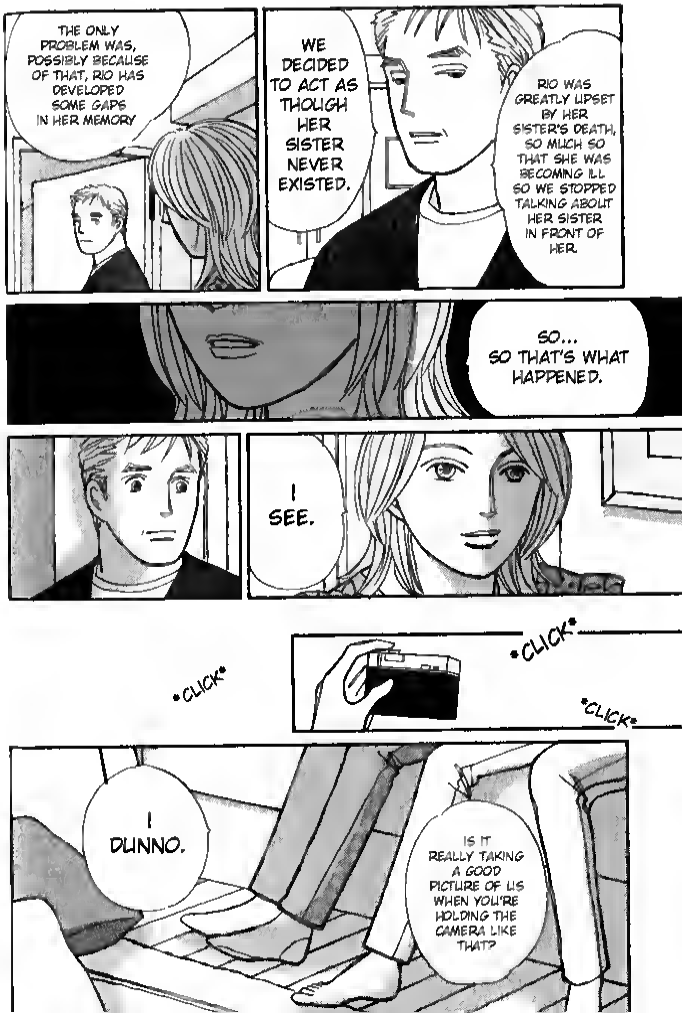
...
WE ONLY NEEDED ONE OR TWO. NOW IT'LL BE ONION CURRY!
YOU PEELED *ALL* OF THE ONIONS, RIO-CHAN?
COOKING IS FUN!
I'M NOT MAD
I WAS JUST POINTING OUT YOUR MISTAKE
YOU'RE MAD AT ME ...
YOU LOOK SAD.
HAHA
YEAH.
DO YOU HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE GET MAD AT YOU?
I'LL TRY NOT TO GET ANGRY AT YOU, THEN.

THERE ARE GAPS IN MY MEMORY
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MUCH FROM WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD...
A 10-YEAR-OLD
A 10-YEAR-OLD?!
TOSSS
SOMETIMES YOU ACT LIKE A 10-YEAR-OLD CHILD, RIO-CHAN
WITHIN THREE BRAID-LENGTHS.
HOW CLOSE?
BESIDES, WE SHOULD STAY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER LIKE THIS
D-ZO DOZO.
AT THIS TIME OF DAY IT HAS TO BE EITHER THE NEWSPAPER OR EVANGELISTS.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SOMEONE'S
THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE CAN DO.
THEN WE CAN'T DO ANY-THING, CAN WE?


BUT YOU'RE A "10-YEAR-OLD!"
AND YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY NEXT YEAR.
YEAH.
YOU'RE PRETTY DEVIOUS FOR A "10-YEAR-OLD," TOO.
YOU PROMISED NOT TO GET MAD.
WHAT ARE THESE?


I'VE BEEN PACKING UP THINGS FOR WHEN WE MOVE BACK INTO THE OLD HOUSE.
IF I DIDN'T PUT THEM OUT HERE WHERE YOU COULD SEE THEM, YOU'D NEVER ARRANGE FOR US TO MOVE BACK, WOULD YOU?
MMM HMM ...
OH, AND I DON'T WANT TO LIVE WITH RIO-CHAN.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO LET MY SON LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF WITH HER.
I UNDERSTAND
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT SHE'S MY SON'S OLDER SISTER.
I'LL SPEAK TO HER ABOUT RENTING A ROOM NEAR THE SCHOOL
IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH? YOU DON'T NEED TO RUSH THIS SO MUCH
WHAT?


EVEN THOUGH I'M CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT HE EATS AND WHAT HE LEARNS, MAKING SURE THERE ARE NO IMPURITIES IN THEM,
THINK ABOUT IT IF SHE DOES SOMETHING HORRIBLE, MY SON WILL BE STIGMATIZED FOREVER. IT MIGHT EVEN AFFECT HIS CHANCES AT GETTING INTO COLLEGE OR FINDING A JOB.
THERE'S SOMEONE HORRIBLE WHO'S SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH HIM.
I NEVER HEAR HER MENTIONED
WHY IS THAT?
SAY, DIDN'T RIO HAVE A YOUNGER SISTER? ONE WHO DIED WHEN SHE WAS ONLY ABOUT 6 MONTHS OLD?
SO WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO ABOUT THAT?
NOTHING


THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THAT, RIO HAS DEVELOPED SOME GAPS IN HER MEMORY
WE DECIDED TO ACT AS THOUGH HER SISTER NEVER EXISTED.
RIO WAS GREATLY UPSET BY HER SISTER'S DEATH, SO MUCH SO THAT SHE WAS BECOMING ILL SO WE STOPPED TALKING ABOUT HER SISTER IN FRONT OF HER.
SO... SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
I SEE.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
I DUNNO.
IS IT REALLY TAKING A GOOD PICTURE OF US WHEN YOU'RE HOLDING THE CAMERA LIKE THAT?

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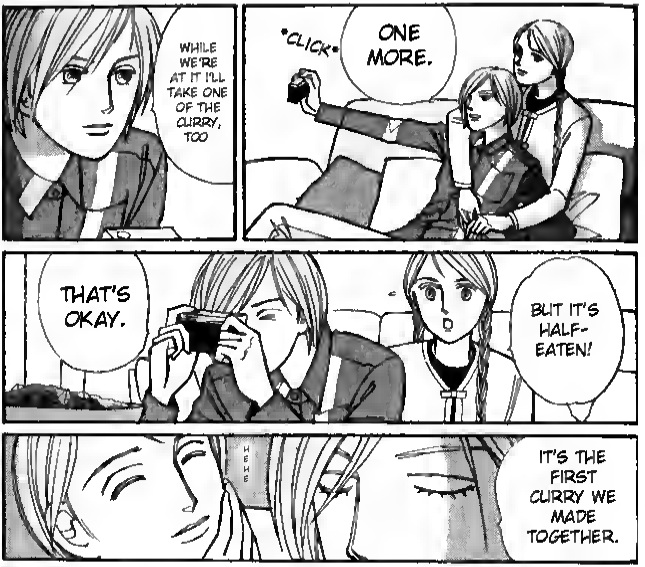


THAT WAVE MUST BE COMING HERE
FROM FARTHER AWAY THAN A MEMORY,

COMING HERE
TO IMMERSE US
IN THAT WATER.

PIETA #2 -END-

ピエタ

-pietà-

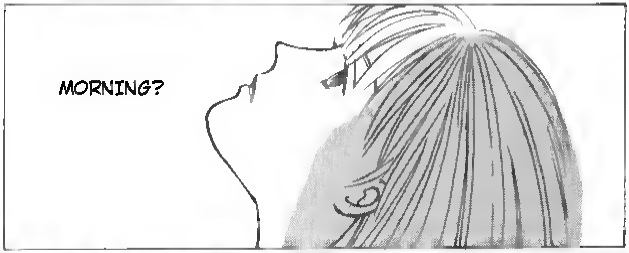
#3

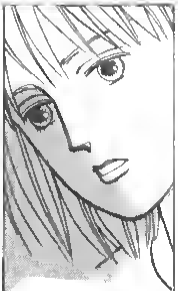
I
WAKE UP
IN A
WHITE
BOX.

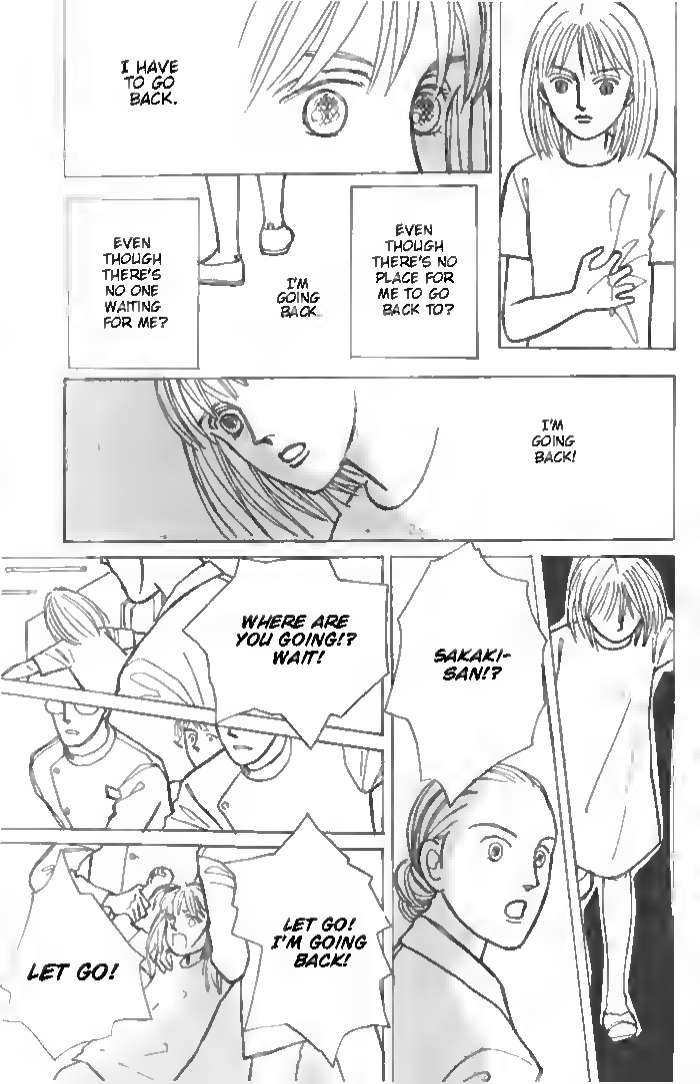
A VESSEL LEFT ABANDONED AND FORGOTTEN AT THE EDGE OF SPACE.

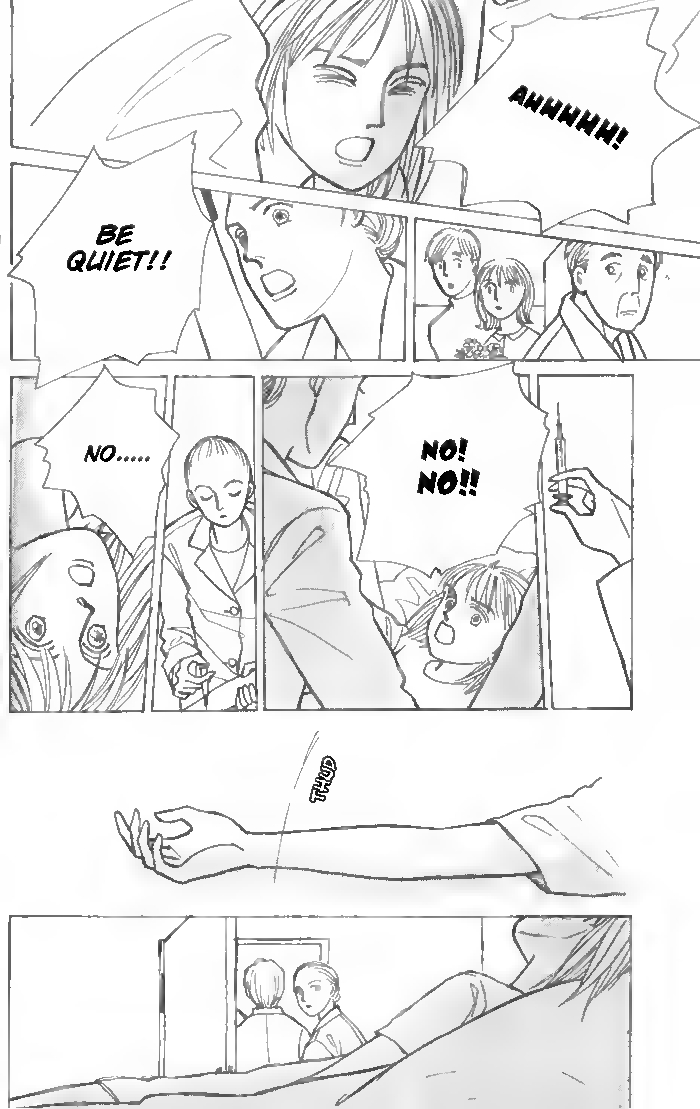
A MORNING OF THE LAST REMAINING CREW MEMBER ON

LINOLEUM FLOORS, PLASTER WALLS.



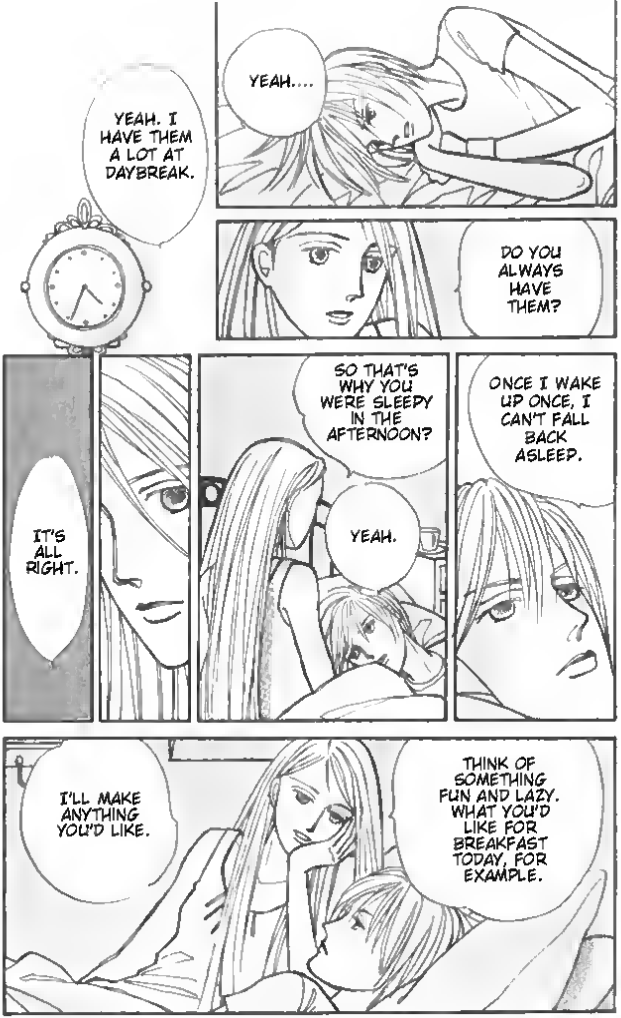


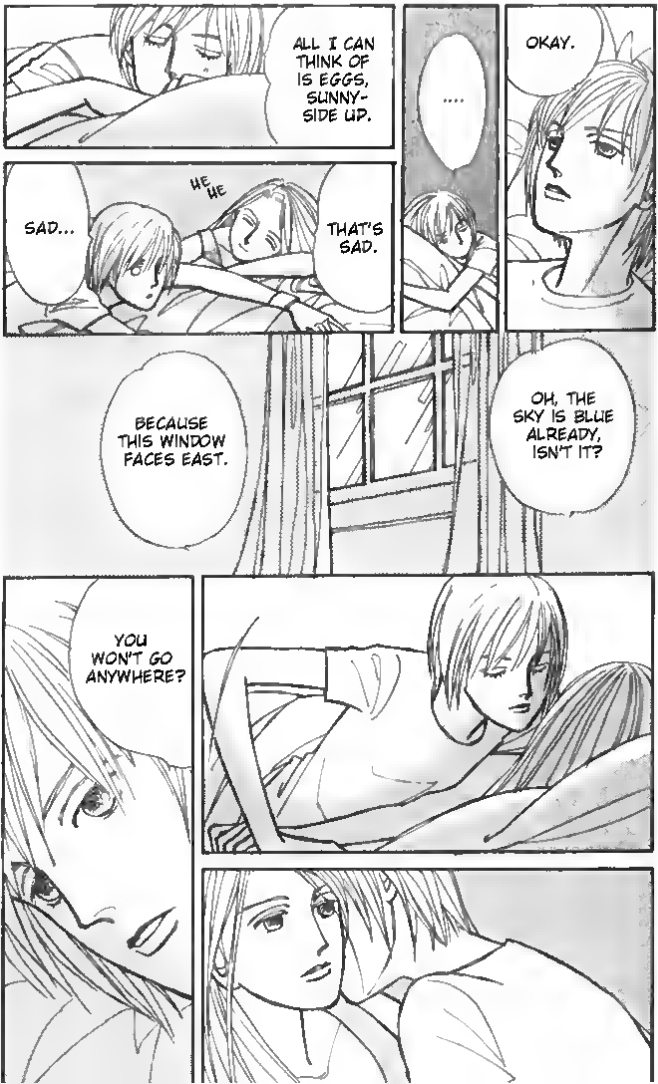

I HAVE TO GO BACK.
EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NO ONE WAITING FOR ME?
I'M GOING BACK.
EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NO PLACE FOR ME TO GO BACK TO?
I'M GOING BACK!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING!? WAIT!
SAKAKI-SAN!?
LET GO!
LET GO! I'M GOING BACK!

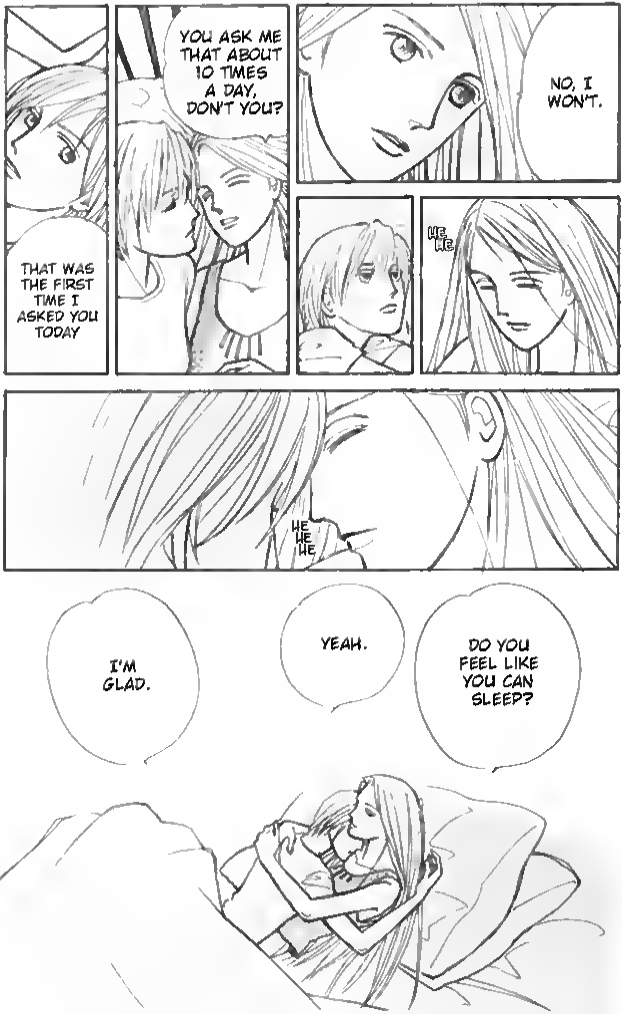

AHHHHH!
BE QUIET!!
NO.....
NO! NO!!
THUD

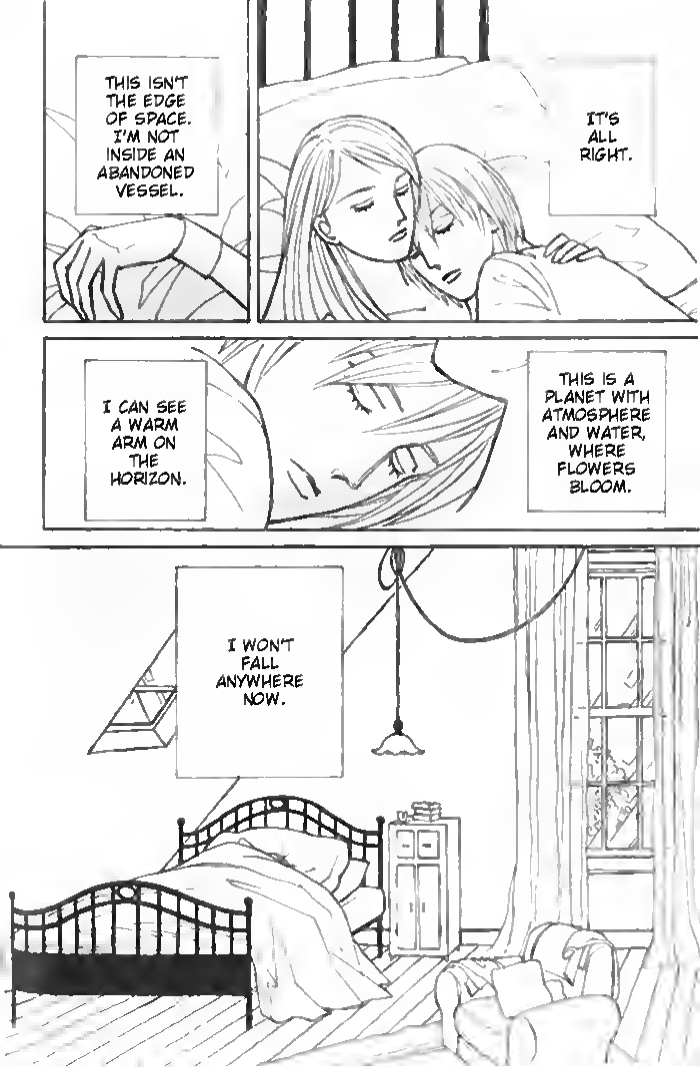
HELP ME...
twinn
wobble
WOBBLE
Ahhhhhhhhhh!

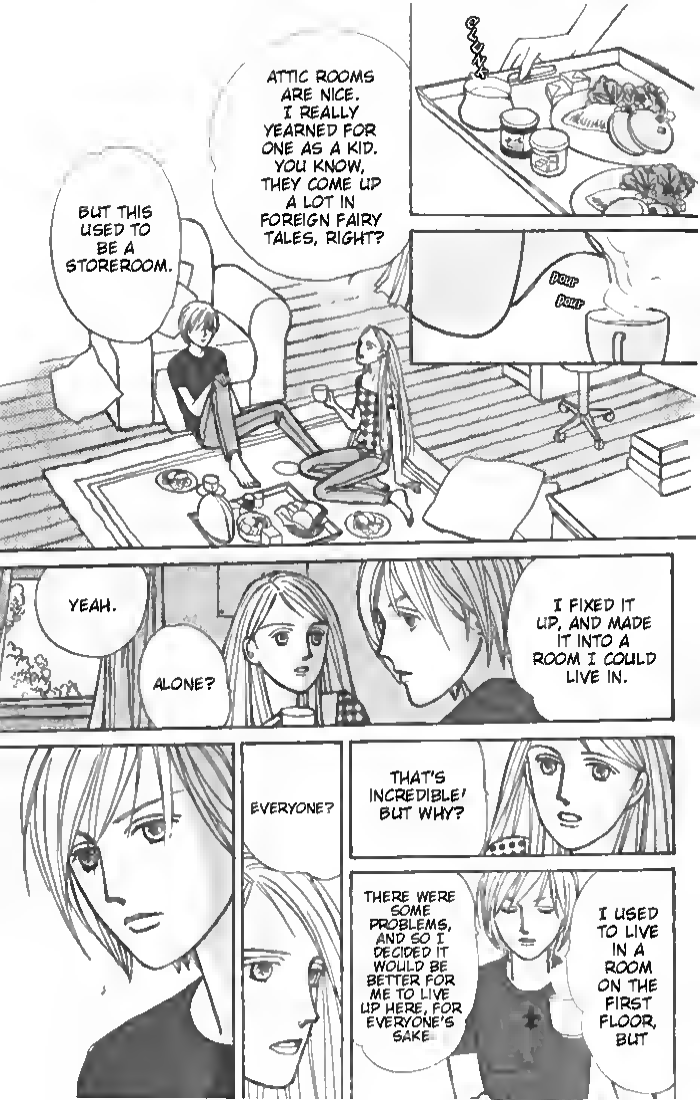
!!
WHAT'S WRONG, RIO-CHAN?
YOU'RE SHAKING.
DID YOU HAVE A BAD DREAM?

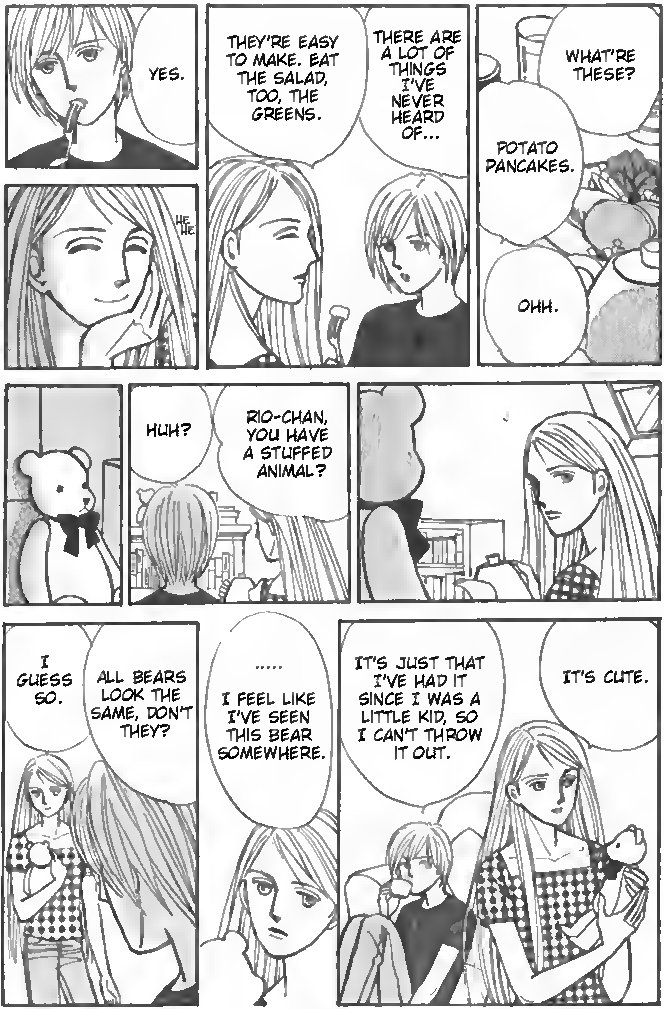

YEAH....
YEAH. I HAVE THEM A LOT AT DAYBREAK.
DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE THEM?
ONCE I WAKE UP ONCE, I CAN'T FALL BACK ASLEEP.
SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE SLEEPY IN THE AFTERNOON?
YEAH.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
THINK OF SOMETHING FUN AND LAZY. WHAT YOU'D LIKE FOR BREAKFAST TODAY, FOR EXAMPLE.
I'LL MAKE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE.

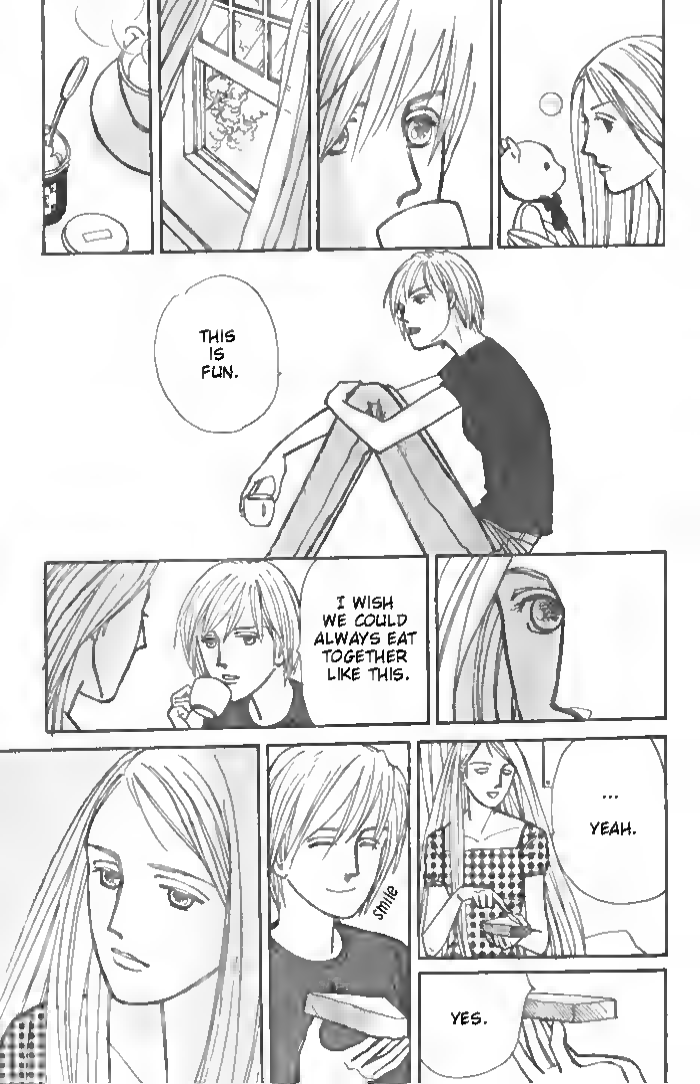

ALL I CAN THINK OF IS EGGS, SUNNY-SIDE UP.
....
OKAY.
HE HE
SAD...
THAT'S SAD.
BECAUSE THIS WINDOW FACES EAST.
OH, THE SKY IS BLUE ALREADY, ISN'T IT?
YOU WON'T GO ANYWHERE?


THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I ASKED YOU TODAY
YOU ASK ME THAT ABOUT 10 TIMES A DAY, DON'T YOU?
NO, I WON'T.
HE HE
HE HE HE
I'M GLAD.
YEAH.
DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN SLEEP?


THIS ISN'T THE EDGE OF SPACE. I'M NOT INSIDE AN ABANDONED VESSEL.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I CAN SEE A WARM ARM ON THE HORIZON.
THIS IS A PLANET WITH ATMOSPHERE AND WATER, WHERE FLOWERS BLOOM.
I WON'T FALL ANYWHERE NOW.

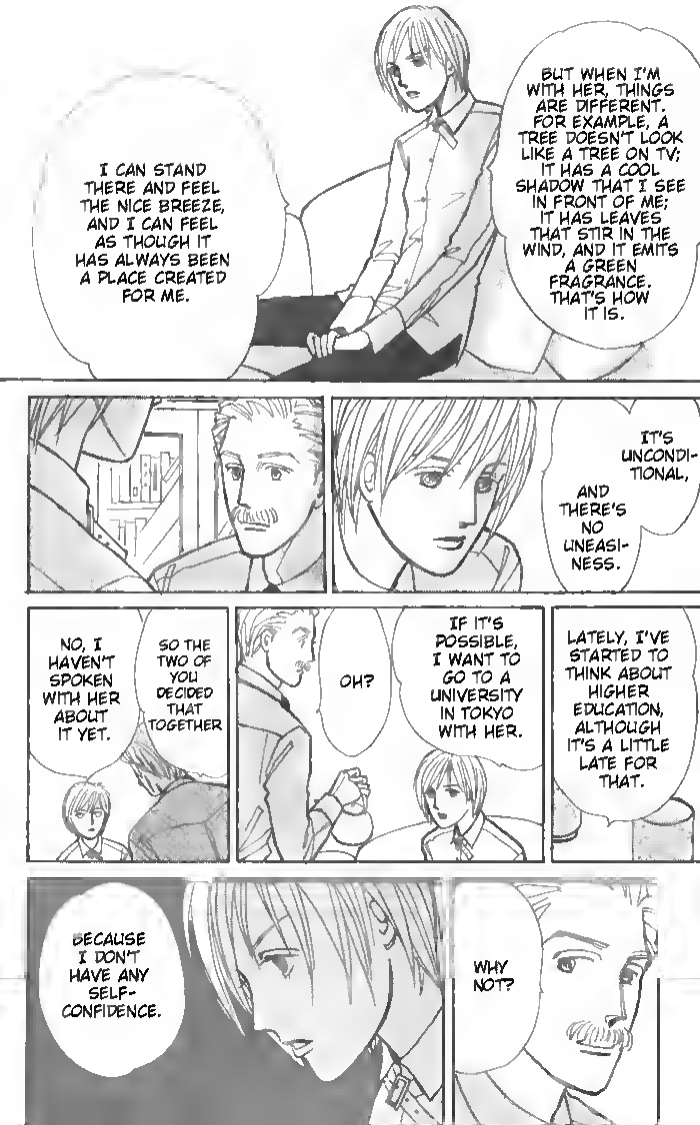

ATTIC ROOMS ARE NICE. I REALLY YEARNED FOR ONE AS A KID. YOU KNOW, THEY COME UP A LOT IN FOREIGN FAIRY TALES, RIGHT?
BUT THIS USED TO BE A STOREROOM.
GRUNK
PURR PURR
YEAH.
ALONE?
I FIXED IT UP, AND MADE IT INTO A ROOM I COULD LIVE IN.
EVERYONE?
THAT'S INCREDIBLE! BUT WHY?
THERE WERE SOME PROBLEMS, AND SO I DECIDED IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ME TO LIVE UP HERE, FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE.
I USED TO LIVE IN A ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR, BUT

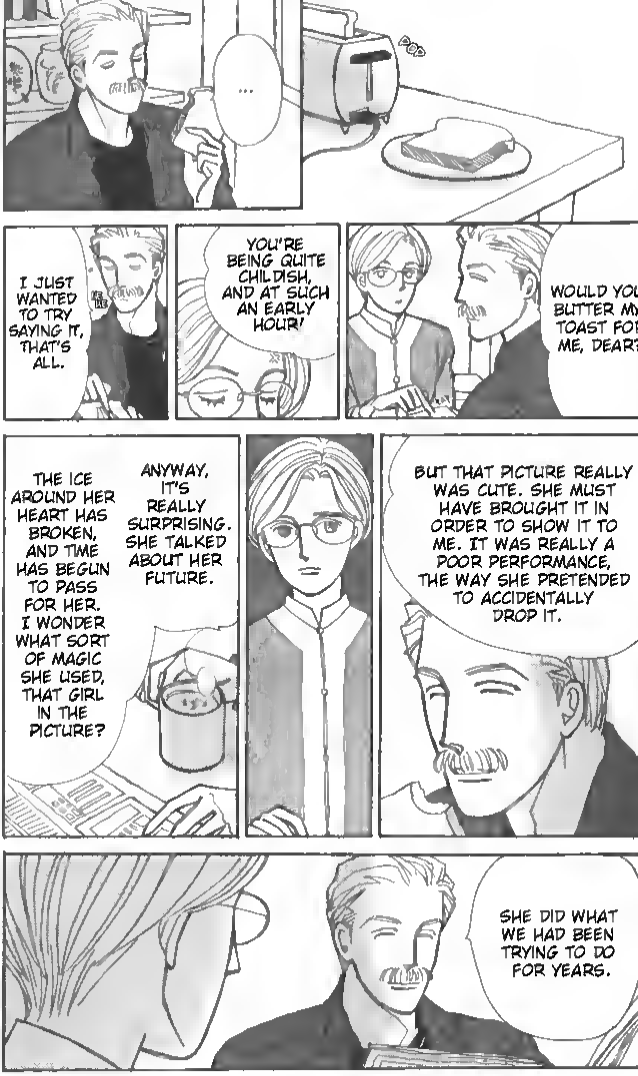

YES.
THEY'RE EASY TO MAKE. EAT THE SALAD, TOO, THE GREENS.
THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I'VE NEVER HEARD OF...
WHAT'RE THESE?
POTATO PANCAKES.
OHH.
HE HE
HUH?
RIO-CHAN, YOU HAVE A STUFFED ANIMAL?
I GUESS SO.
ALL BEARS LOOK THE SAME, DON'T THEY?
.....
I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN THIS BEAR SOMEWHERE.
IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD IT SINCE I WAS A LITTLE KID, SO I CAN'T THROW IT OUT.
IT'S CUTE.


THIS IS FUN.
I WISH WE COULD ALWAYS EAT TOGETHER LIKE THIS.
...
YEAH.
Smile
YES.

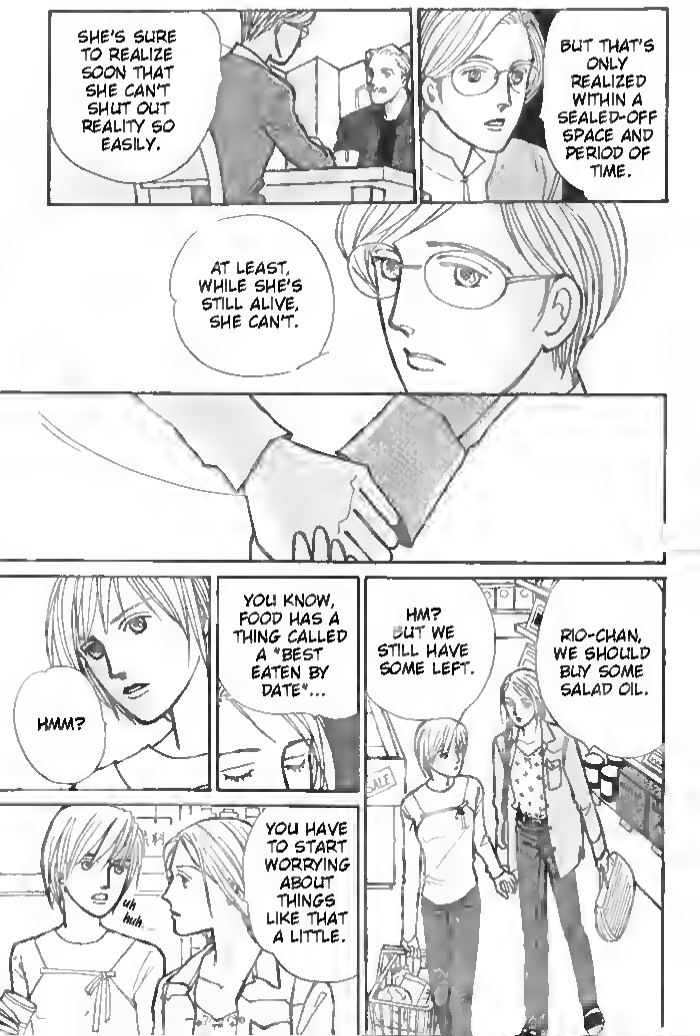
IT FEELS LIKE YOU'VE CHANGED SOMEHOW. YOUR COLOR IS BETTER TOO.
....
I HADN'T REALLY NOTICED.
I SEE. MAYBE IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION. BUT I'M GLAD THAT YOU LOOK SO WELL. GO AHEAD.
HM? SOMETHING FELL. A PICTURE?
thump
whoosh

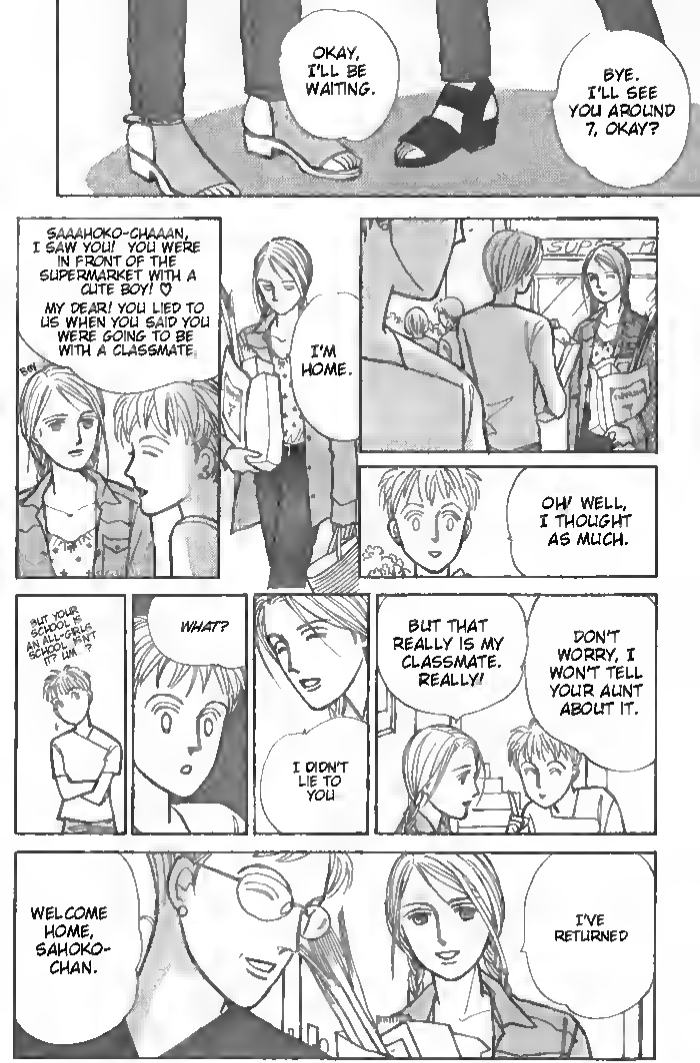
SHE'S QUITE A LOOKER, ISN'T SHE? SHE SEEMS TO RESEMBLE YOU A BIT, SAKAKI-KUN.
YOU SEEM TO BE QUITE CLOSE. I DIDN'T KNOW.
HM' BUT, YES, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A GOOD FRIEND.
A CLASSMATE. HIGA-SAN.
A FRIEND?
WELL, ISN'T THAT SOMETHING!
SHE BUTTERS MY TOAST FOR ME.
MUM MUM
SHE LOOKS VERY KIND.
NO, I DON'T MEAN HER PHYSICAL FEATURES, I MEAN HER BEARING SOMEHOW...
I DON'T THINK SHE DOES.
UP UNTIL NOW, IT WAS AS THOUGH NO MATTER WHERE I WENT, OR WHAT I LOOKED AT,
THERE WAS A WALL OF GLASS BETWEEN ME AND THE REST OF THE WORLD, LIKE I WAS SEEING IT THROUGH A TV SCREEN.
I FEEL LIKE I UNDERSTAND NOW. THAT I'M HERE, AND I'M CONNECTED TO THIS WORLD.


I CAN STAND THERE AND FEEL THE NICE BREEZE, AND I CAN FEEL AS THOUGH IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE CREATED FOR ME.
BUT WHEN I'M WITH HER, THINGS ARE DIFFERENT. FOR EXAMPLE, A TREE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A TREE ON TV; IT HAS A COOL SHADOW THAT I SEE IN FRONT OF ME; IT HAS LEAVES THAT STIR IN THE WIND, AND IT EMITS A GREEN FRAGRANCE. THAT'S HOW IT IS.
IT'S UNCONDITIONAL, AND THERE'S NO UNEASINESS.
LATELY, I'VE STARTED TO THINK ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION, ALTHOUGH IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT.
IF IT'S POSSIBLE, I WANT TO GO TO A UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO WITH HER.
OH?
SO THE TWO OF YOU DECIDED THAT TOGETHER
NO, I HAVEN'T SPOKEN WITH HER ABOUT IT YET.
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY SELF-CONFIDENCE.

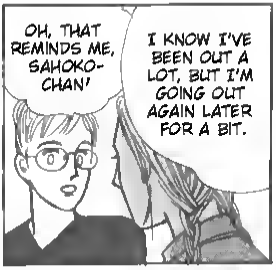

...
POP
I JUST WANTED TO TRY SAYING IT, THAT'S ALL.
YOU'RE BEING QUITE CHILDISH, AND AT SUCH AN EARLY HOUR!
WOULD YOU BUTTER MY TOAST FOR ME, DEAR?
THE ICE AROUND HER HEART HAS BROKEN, AND TIME HAS BEGUN TO PASS FOR HER. I WONDER WHAT SORT OF MAGIC SHE USED, THAT GIRL IN THE PICTURE?
ANYWAY, IT'S REALLY SURPRISING. SHE TALKED ABOUT HER FUTURE.
BUT THAT PICTURE REALLY WAS CUTE. SHE MUST HAVE BROUGHT IT IN ORDER TO SHOW IT TO ME. IT WAS REALLY A POOR PERFORMANCE, THE WAY SHE PRETENDED TO ACCIDENTALLY DROP IT.
SHE DID WHAT WE HAD BEEN TRYING TO DO FOR YEARS.

ESSENTIALLY, NOTHING HAS CHANGED WITH RESPECT TO HER SITUATION OR HER PAST WOUNDS
IF THIS TEMPORARY PLEASURE CAUSES HER TO LET HER GUARD DOWN AND LEAVES THE DOOR TO HER HEART OPEN,
SHE CLOSED OFF HER HEART BECAUSE SHE INSTINCTIVELY KNEW THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT HERSELF, RIGHT?
IT COULD BE DANGEROUS.
WE MUSN'T JUST BLINDLY BE HAPPY ABOUT THIS.
SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT HERSELF FROM ANY KIND OF INVASION.
FROM WHAT YOU'VE SAID, IT SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S JUST PLAYING HOUSE.
PLAYING HOUSE CAN ALSO RECONSTRUCT THE WORLD.
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY, IF HAPPINESS BUILDS UP IT CAN BECOME SOMETHING POWERFUL
MAYBE WE SHOULD EXPECT THAT TO HAPPEN, INSTEAD
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN SHE SHOULD KEEP HER HEART SEALED FOREVER.


SHE'S SURE TO REALIZE SOON THAT SHE CAN'T SHUT OUT REALITY SO EASILY.
BUT THAT'S ONLY REALIZED WITHIN A SEALED-OFF SPACE AND PERIOD OF TIME.
AT LEAST, WHILE SHE'S STILL ALIVE, SHE CAN'T.
HMM?
YOU KNOW, FOOD HAS A THING CALLED A "BEST EATEN BY DATE"...
HM? BUT WE STILL HAVE SOME LEFT.
RIO-CHAN, WE SHOULD BUY SOME SALAD OIL.
uh huh
YOU HAVE TO START WORRYING ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT A LITTLE.


OKAY, I'LL BE WAITING.
BYE. I'LL SEE YOU AROUND 7, OKAY?
SAAAHOKO-CHAAAN, I SAW YOU! YOU WERE IN FRONT OF THE SUPERMARKET WITH A CUTE BOY! ♡
MY DEAR! YOU LIED TO US WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO BE WITH A CLASSMATE.
I'M HOME.
OH! WELL, I THOUGHT AS MUCH.
BUT YOUR SCHOOL IS AN ALL-GIRLS SCHOOL, ISN'T IT? UM ?
WHAT?
I DIDN'T LIE TO YOU
BUT THAT REALLY IS MY CLASSMATE. REALLY!
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T TELL YOUR AUNT ABOUT IT.
WELCOME HOME, SAHOKO-CHAN.
I'VE RETURNED

A LITTLE WHILE AGO, YOUR PARENTS CALLED. THEY WANT TO GO OUT TO DINNER WITH YOU TONIGHT.


OH, THAT REMINDS ME, SAHOKO-CHAN!
I KNOW I'VE BEEN OUT A LOT, BUT I'M GOING OUT AGAIN LATER FOR A BIT.

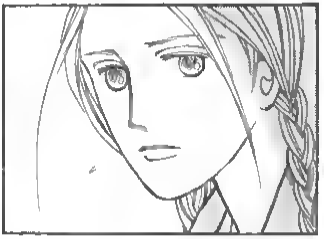
THE BRAND OF TOFU WE USUALLY BUY WAS ALL SOLD OUT, SO I HAD TO GET A DIFFERENT BRAND.
OH.
THAT'S FINE.
SUPER W.L.W

IT'S ALL RIGHT IF THEY COME AT 6, ISN'T IT?
THEY SAID THEY NEEDED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT SOMETHING, BUT I THINK THEY REALLY JUST WANT TO SEE THEIR DAUGHTER'S FACE.

I'M SORRY. SOMETHING URGENT CAME UP, AND I CAN'T COME TODAY.

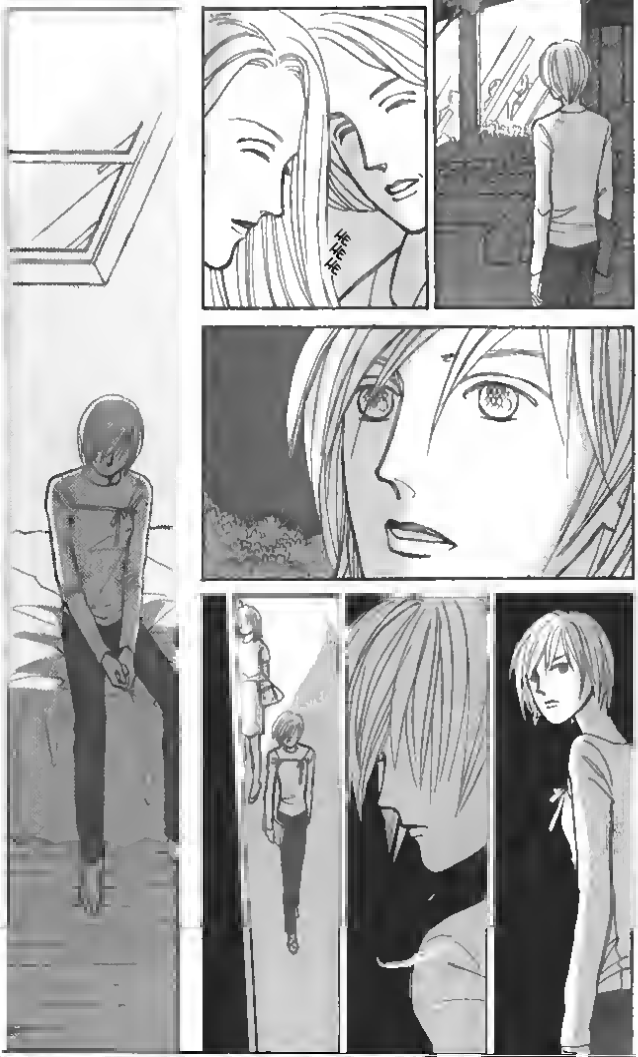
HELLO, RIO-CHAN.

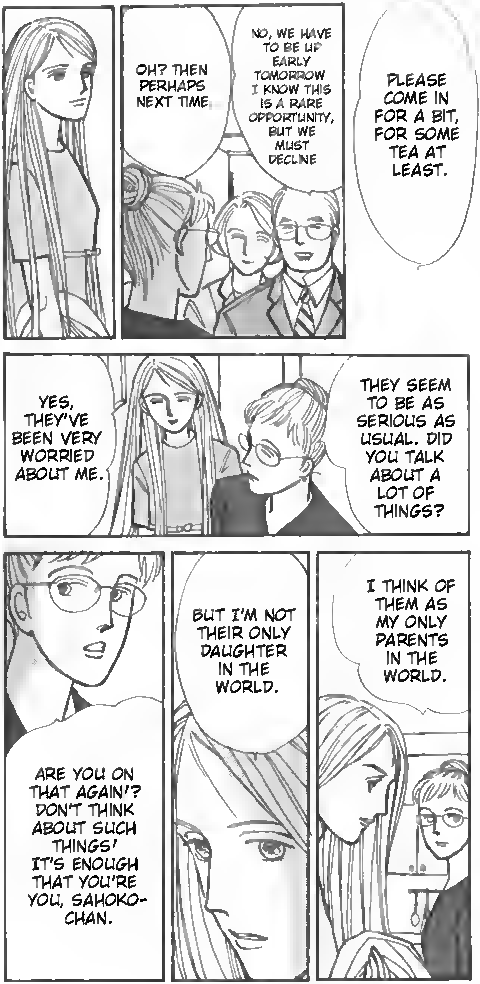
ACCEPT THEIR OFFER, AND LET THEM BUY YOU SOMETHING NICE TO EAT.
YES...
UM...

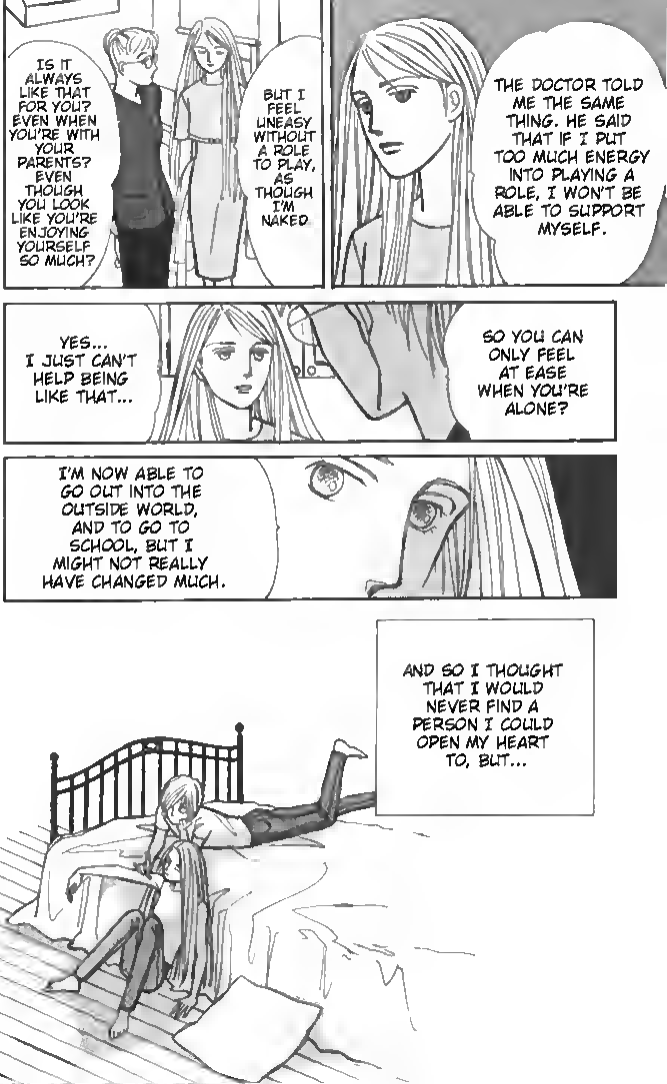


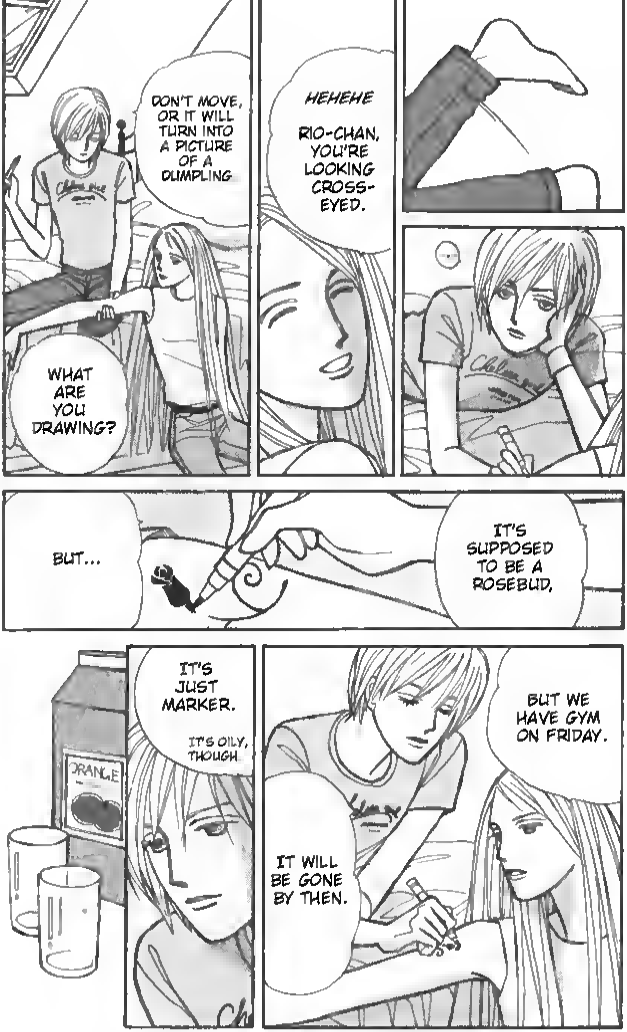
=SIGH=
CLICK
OKAY, I SEE... YEAH, I UNDER-STAND.
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW. YEAH, I'LL PUT IT IN THE FRIDGE.
SUPERM
SU
SIGH

ﾊﾗﾘ


嗯嗯

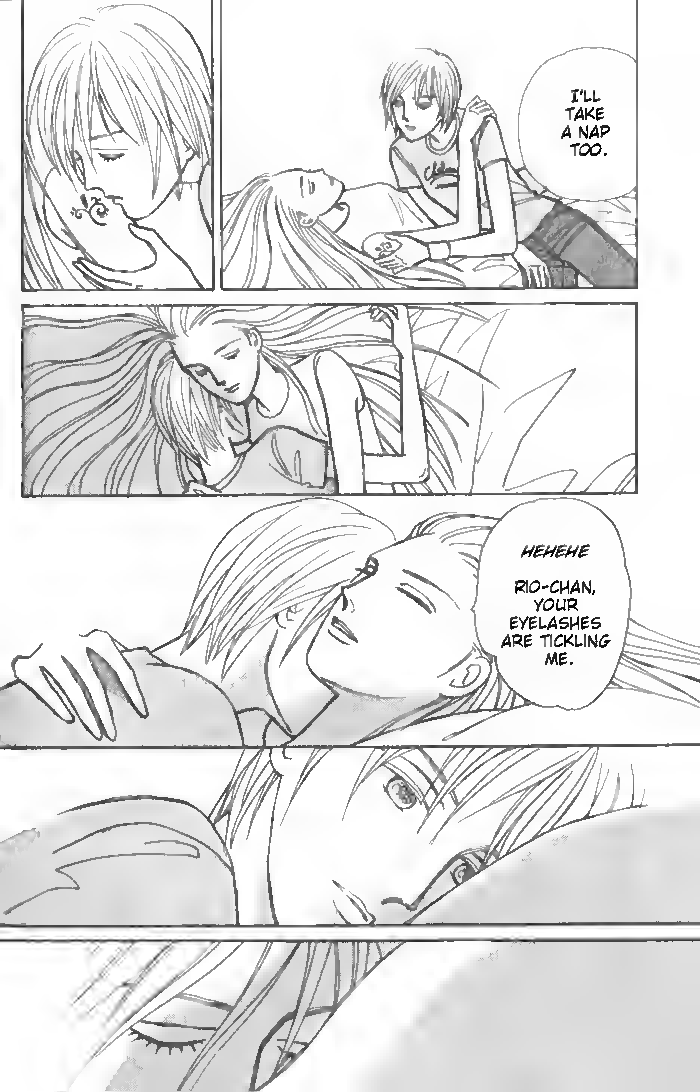

PLEASE COME IN FOR A BIT, FOR SOME TEA AT LEAST.
NO, WE HAVE TO BE UP EARLY TOMORROW. I KNOW THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY, BUT WE MUST DECLINE
OH? THEN PERHAPS NEXT TIME.
THEY SEEM TO BE AS SERIOUS AS USUAL. DID YOU TALK ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS?
YES, THEY'VE BEEN VERY WORRIED ABOUT ME.
I THINK OF THEM AS MY ONLY PARENTS IN THE WORLD.
BUT I'M NOT THEIR ONLY DAUGHTER IN THE WORLD.
ARE YOU ON THAT AGAIN!? DON'T THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS! IT'S ENOUGH THAT YOU'RE YOU, SAHOKO-CHAN.

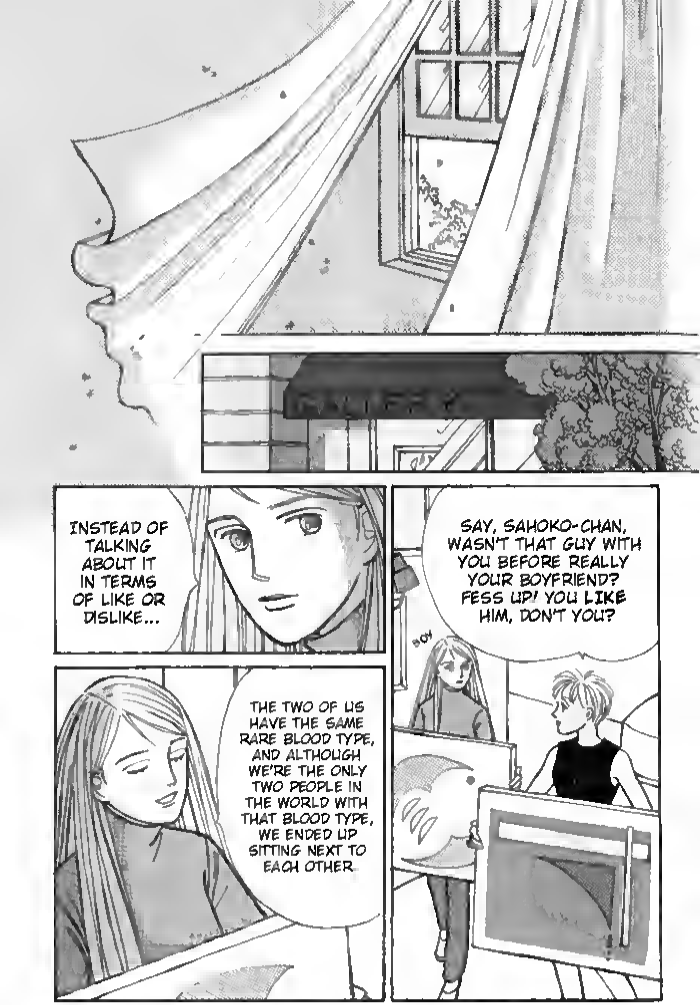

IS IT ALWAYS LIKE THAT FOR YOU? EVEN WHEN YOU'RE WITH YOUR PARENTS? EVEN THOUGH YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELF SO MUCH?
BUT I FEEL UNEASY WITHOUT A ROLE TO PLAY, AS THOUGH I'M NAKED.
THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THE SAME THING. HE SAID THAT IF I PUT TOO MUCH ENERGY INTO PLAYING A ROLE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO SUPPORT MYSELF.
YES... I JUST CAN'T HELP BEING LIKE THAT...
SO YOU CAN ONLY FEEL AT EASE WHEN YOU'RE ALONE?
I'M NOW ABLE TO GO OUT INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AND TO GO TO SCHOOL, BUT I MIGHT NOT REALLY HAVE CHANGED MUCH.
AND SO I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD NEVER FIND A PERSON I COULD OPEN MY HEART TO, BUT...

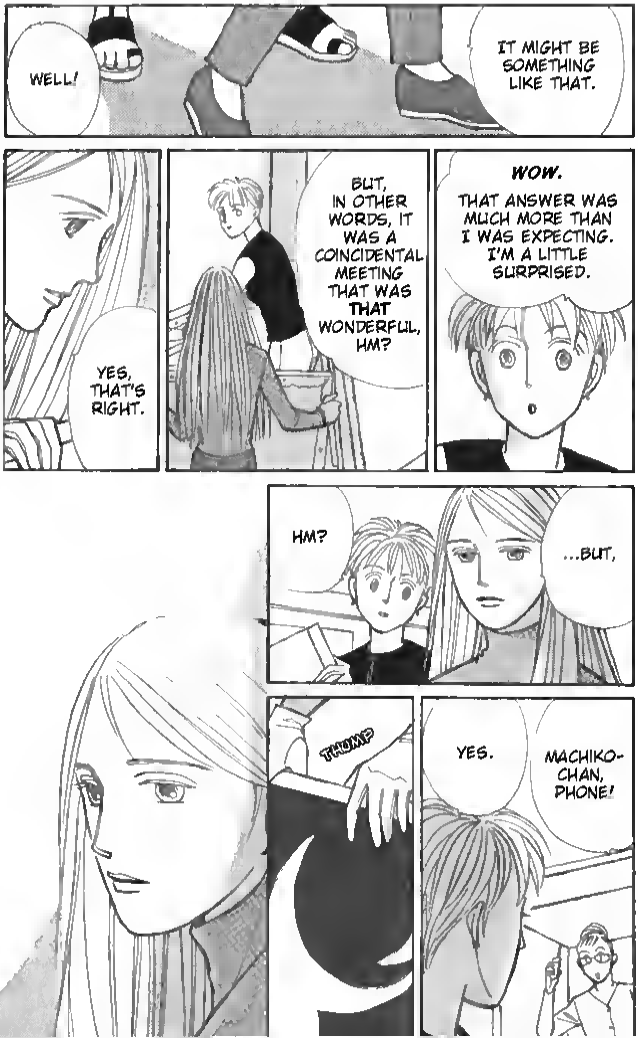

DON'T MOVE, OR IT WILL TURN INTO A PICTURE OF A DUMPLING.
WHAT ARE YOU DRAWING?
HEHEHE
RIO-CHAN, YOU'RE LOOKING CROSS-EYED.
BUT...
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A ROSEBUD.
IT'S JUST MARKER.
IT'S OILY, THOUGH.
ORANGE
BUT WE HAVE GYM ON FRIDAY.
IT WILL BE GONE BY THEN.

I BROUGHT JUICE...

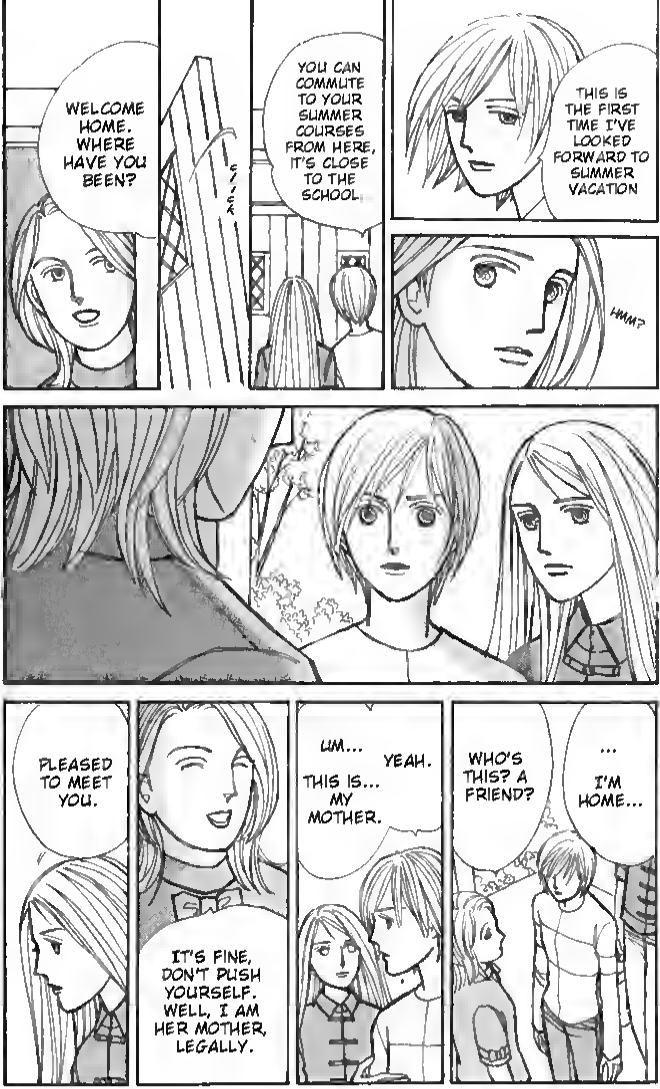
TOGETHER
ALWAYS...
MM
Chelsea girl
Chelsea girl
SIGH.
YES, YOU WERE.
OH NO, WAS I ASLEEP?

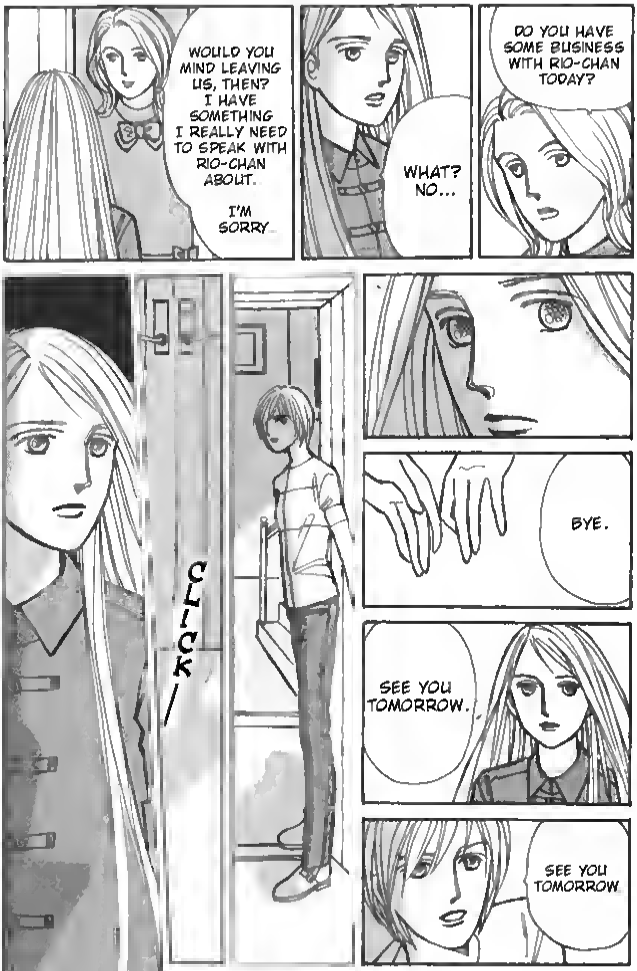

I'LL TAKE A NAP TOO.
HEHEHE
RIO-CHAN, YOUR EYELASHES ARE TICKLING ME.

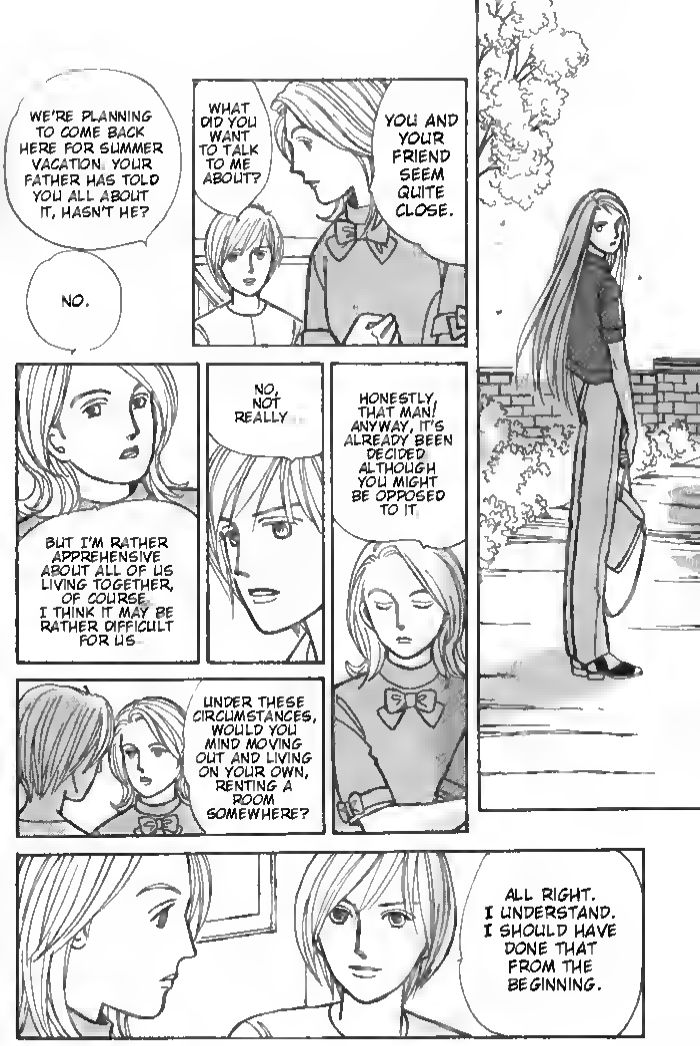

INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT IT IN TERMS OF LIKE OR DISLIKE...
THE TWO OF US HAVE THE SAME RARE BLOOD TYPE, AND ALTHOUGH WE'RE THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WITH THAT BLOOD TYPE, WE ENDED UP SITTING NEXT TO EACH OTHER.
SAY, SAHOKO-CHAN, WASN'T THAT GUY WITH YOU BEFORE REALLY YOUR BOYFRIEND? FESS UP! YOU LIKE HIM, DON'T YOU?
BOY

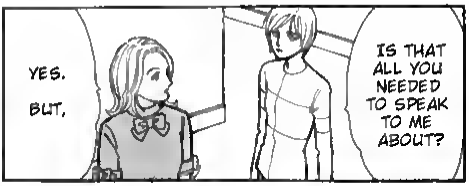

WELL!
IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT, IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS A COINCIDENTAL MEETING THAT WAS THAT WONDERFUL, HM?
WOW.
THAT ANSWER WAS MUCH MORE THAN I WAS EXPECTING. I'M A LITTLE SURPRISED.
HM?
...BUT,
PHONE!
YES.
MACHIKO-CHAN, PHONE!

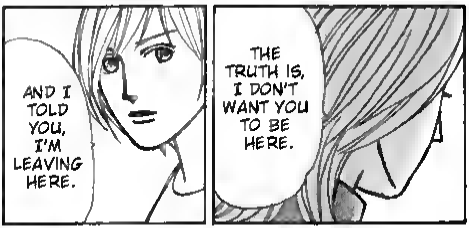
WAS THAT REALLY ALL IT WAS?
COINCIDENCE?
I WAS PLANNING TO, BUT
YEAH...
YOU'RE GOING TO GO BACK TO YOUR PARENTS' HOUSE, AREN'T YOU?
I WONDER IF THE RAINY SEASON HAS STARTED YET.
IT'S HOT TODAY, ISN'T IT?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO DURING SUMMER VACATION?
HEHE
IT'S FOR STUDYING, SO I ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO DO IT.
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA.
STUDY, STUDY!
I HAVE SUMMER COURSES, AND SO I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO HAVE THE CLASS PRODIGY TEACH ME.

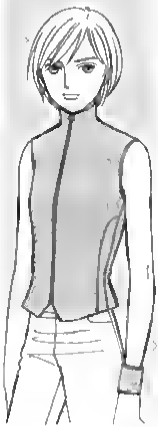

WELCOME HOME. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
SLIDE
YOU CAN COMMUTE TO YOUR SUMMER COURSES FROM HERE, IT'S CLOSE TO THE SCHOOL.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE LOOKED FORWARD TO SUMMER VACATION
HMM?
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
IT'S FINE, DON'T PUSH YOURSELF. WELL, I AM HER MOTHER, LEGALLY.
UM... YEAH. THIS IS... MY MOTHER.
WHO'S THIS? A FRIEND?
... I'M HOME...

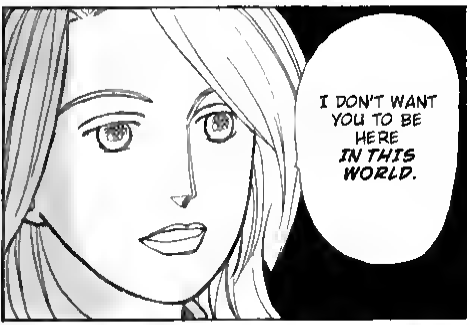

DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH RIO-CHAN TODAY?
WHAT? NO...
WOULD YOU MIND LEAVING US, THEN? I HAVE SOMETHING I REALLY NEED TO SPEAK WITH RIO-CHAN ABOUT.
I'M SORRY.
BYE.
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
CLICK—

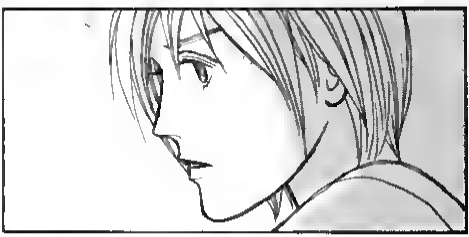

WE'RE PLANNING TO COME BACK HERE FOR SUMMER VACATION. YOUR FATHER HAS TOLD YOU ALL ABOUT IT, HASN'T HE?
NO.
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT?
YOU AND YOUR FRIEND SEEM QUITE CLOSE.
BUT I'M RATHER APPREHENSIVE ABOUT ALL OF US LIVING TOGETHER, OF COURSE. I THINK IT MAY BE RATHER DIFFICULT FOR US.
NO, NOT REALLY...
HONESTLY, THAT MAN! ANYWAY, IT'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED ALTHOUGH YOU MIGHT BE OPPOSED TO IT.
UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD YOU MIND MOVING OUT AND LIVING ON YOUR OWN, RENTING A ROOM SOMEWHERE?
ALL RIGHT. I UNDERSTAND. I SHOULD HAVE DONE THAT FROM THE BEGINNING.


IS THAT ALL YOU NEEDED TO SPEAK TO ME ABOUT?
YES.
BUT,

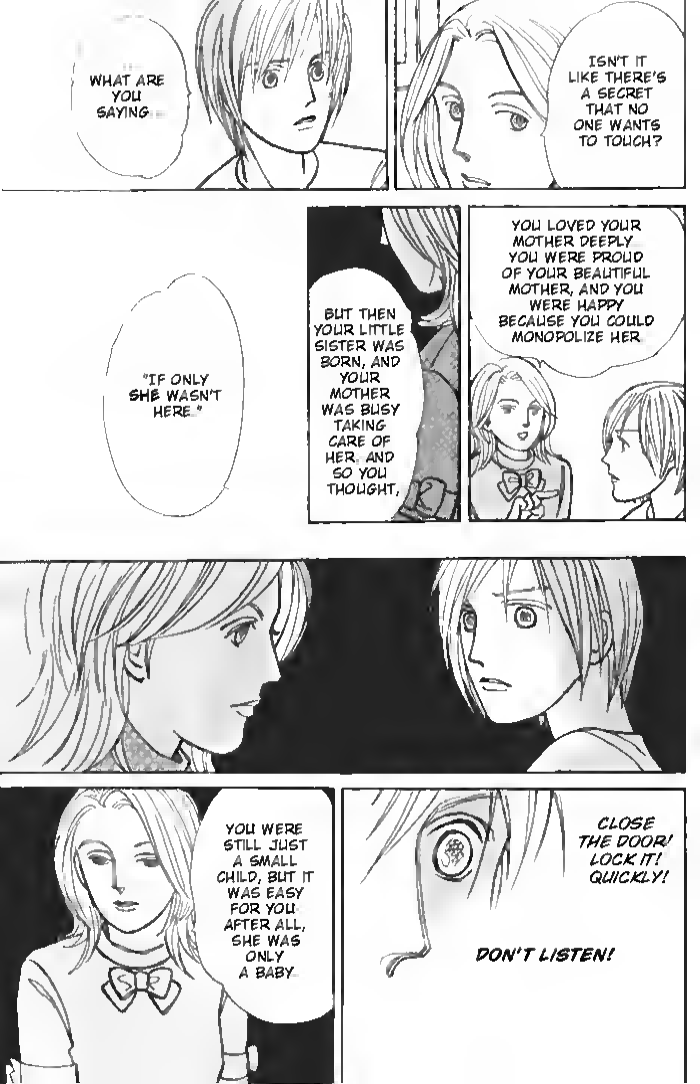

THE TRUTH IS, I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE HERE.
AND I TOLD YOU, I'M LEAVING HERE.



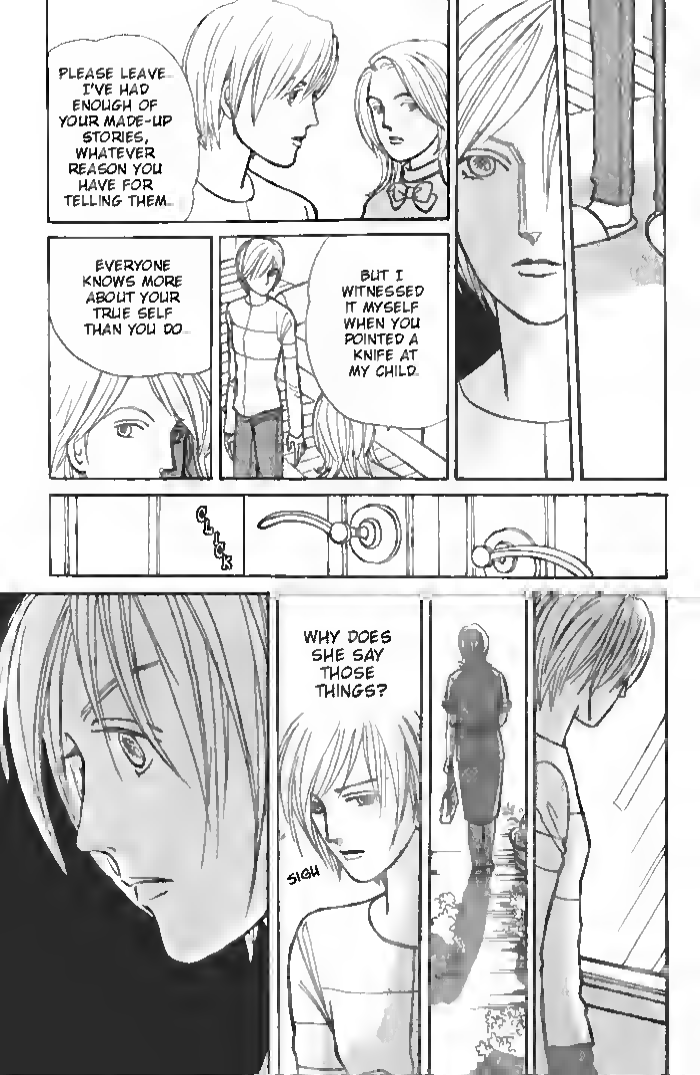

I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE HERE *IN THIS WORLD.*

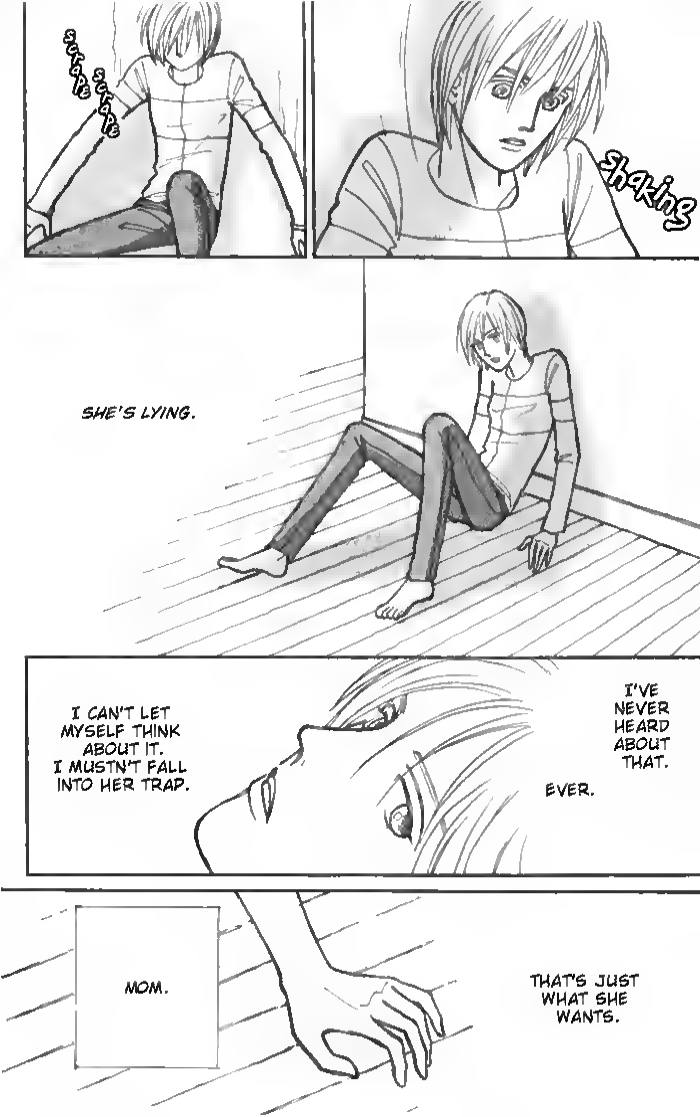


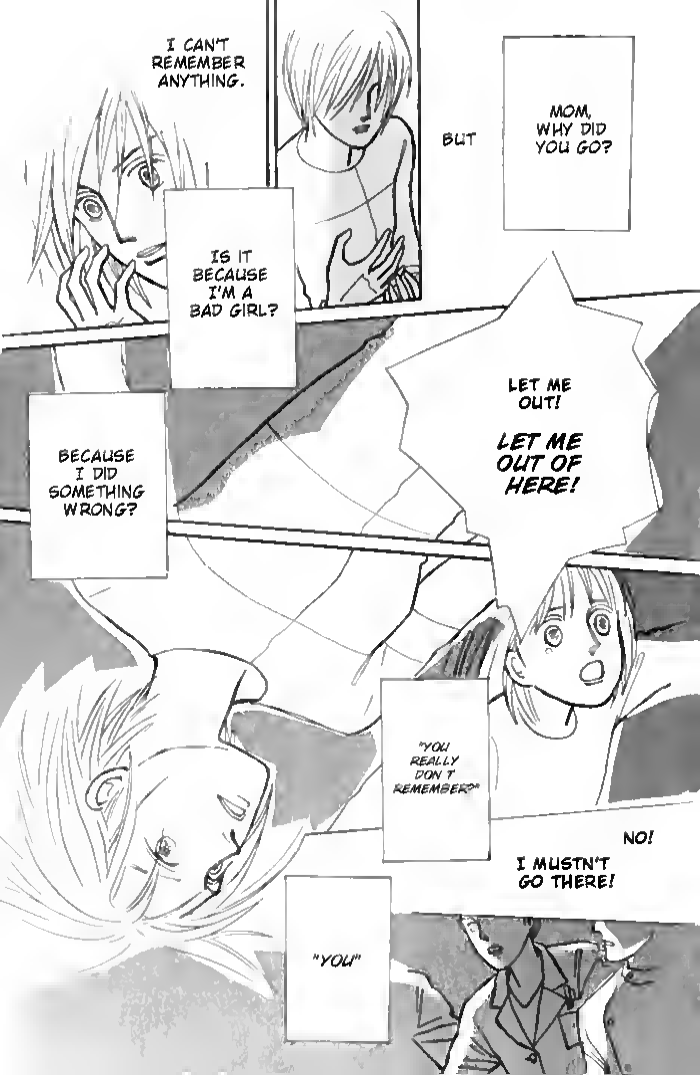
THE WAY THE NEIGHBORS PEEKED THROUGH THEIR CURTAINS AND GOSSIPED.
THE NERVOUSNESS I FELT WHEN I HEARD THE SIREN OF THE APPROACHING AMBULANCE.
FOR EXAMPLE, MY SURPRISE ON THE NIGHT YOU CUT YOUR WRISTS FOR THE FIRST TIME
THIS HOUSE HAS A LOT OF MEMORIES.
THIS WAS MY DREAM HOUSE. I DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE BLEMISHED WITH THAT SORT OF THING
IT HAPPENED OVER AND OVER I SCRUBBED FRANTICALLY AT THE BLOOD THAT HAD FALLEN ON THE FLOOR AND THE RAILING
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE? ALTHOUGH SHE DIED YOUNG, SHE'S YOUR ONLY SISTER, SO WHY DOESN'T ANYONE MENTION HER IN FRONT OF YOU?
WHAT?
AND SO YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOUR LITTLE SISTER TOO, HAVEN'T YOU?
DO YOU REMEMBER? OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN? YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU CAN JUST SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ALL THE UNPLEASANT THINGS

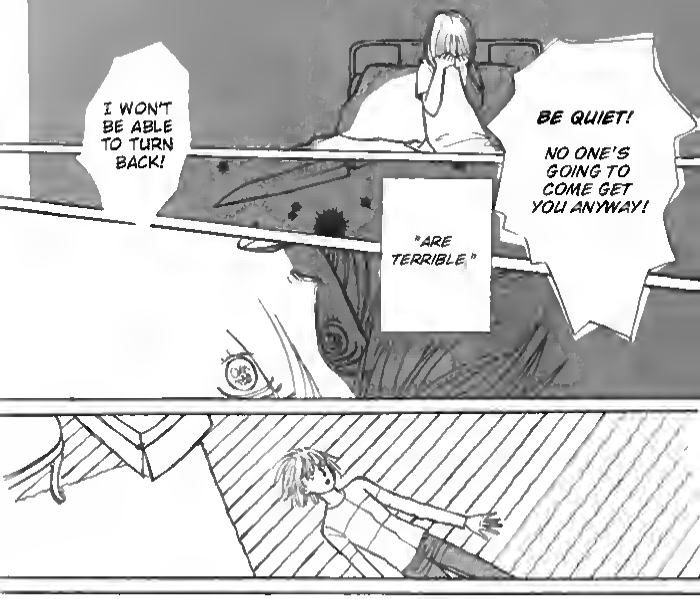

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING...
ISN'T IT LIKE THERE'S A SECRET THAT NO ONE WANTS TO TOUCH?
"IF ONLY SHE WASN'T HERE."
BUT THEN YOUR LITTLE SISTER WAS BORN, AND YOUR MOTHER WAS BUSY TAKING CARE OF HER. AND SO YOU THOUGHT,
YOU LOVED YOUR MOTHER DEEPLY. YOU WERE PROUD OF YOUR BEAUTIFUL MOTHER, AND YOU WERE HAPPY BECAUSE YOU COULD MONOPOLIZE HER.
YOU WERE STILL JUST A SMALL CHILD, BUT IT WAS EASY FOR YOU. AFTER ALL, SHE WAS ONLY A BABY.
CLOSE THE DOOR! LOCK IT! QUICKLY!
DON'T LISTEN!

ONE COULD CALL IT AN ACCIDENT. THERE WAS NO BLAME, NO PUNISHMENT.
EVERYONE THINKS THAT IT'S BETTER THAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER IT, SO THEY'VE BEEN KEEPING IT FROM YOU.
THIS IS NONSENSE. I KNOW IT.
SHE ALWAYS DOES THIS SORT OF THING
BUT SOMETHING INSIDE YOUR HEART IS SHOUTING THAT YOU'RE STRANGE, THAT YOU'RE UNNATURAL.
AND SO YOUR MOTHER LEFT, TOO.
SHE ABANDONED YOU.
AND YOU BECAME EVEN MORE TERRIBLE.


PLEASE LEAVE... I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR MADE-UP STORIES, WHATEVER REASON YOU HAVE FOR TELLING THEM...
EVERYONE KNOWS MORE ABOUT YOUR TRUE SELF THAN YOU DO...
BUT I WITNESSED IT MYSELF WHEN YOU POINTED A KNIFE AT MY CHILD.
CLICK
WHY DOES SHE SAY THOSE THINGS?
SIGH

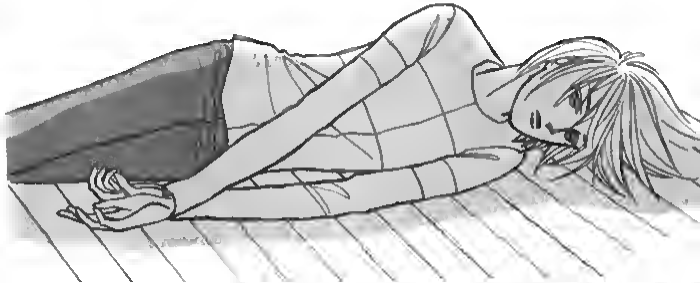

scrape scrape
shaking
SHE'S LYING.
I CAN'T LET MYSELF THINK ABOUT IT. I MUSTN'T FALL INTO HER TRAP.
I'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT THAT.
EVER.
MOM.
THAT'S JUST WHAT SHE WANTS.


I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING.
BUT
MOM, WHY DID YOU GO?
IS IT BECAUSE I'M A BAD GIRL?
LET ME OUT!
LET ME OUT OF HERE!
BECAUSE I DID SOMETHING WRONG?
"YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER?"
NO!
I MUSTN'T GO THERE!
"YOU!"



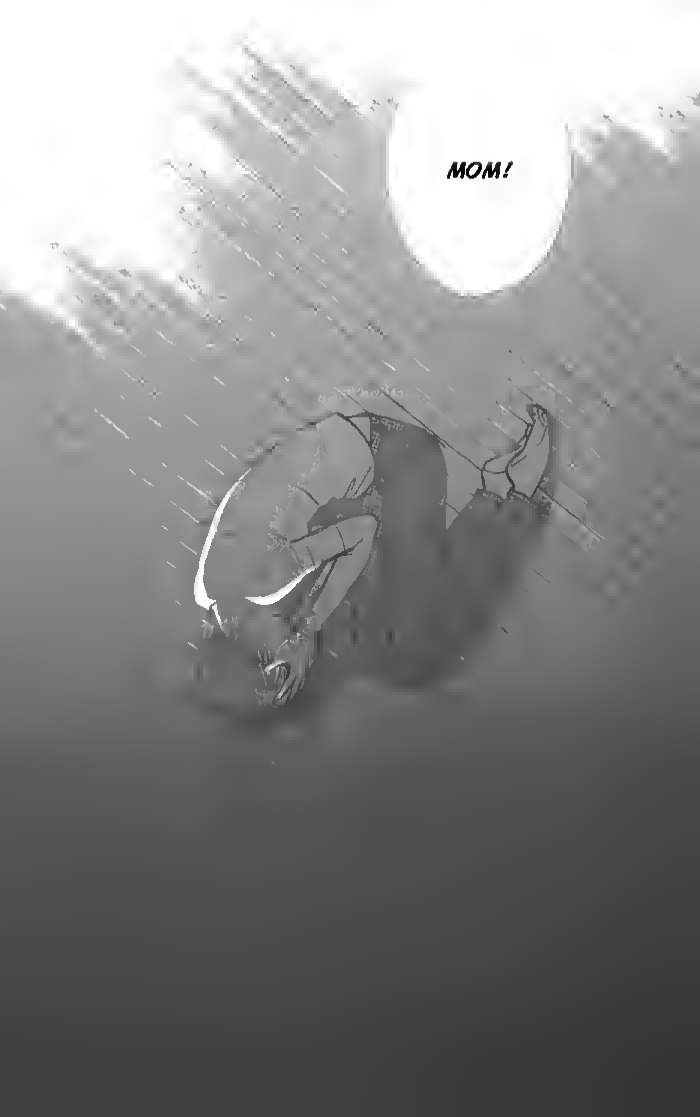
THIS IS JUST A PLACE OF HURT,

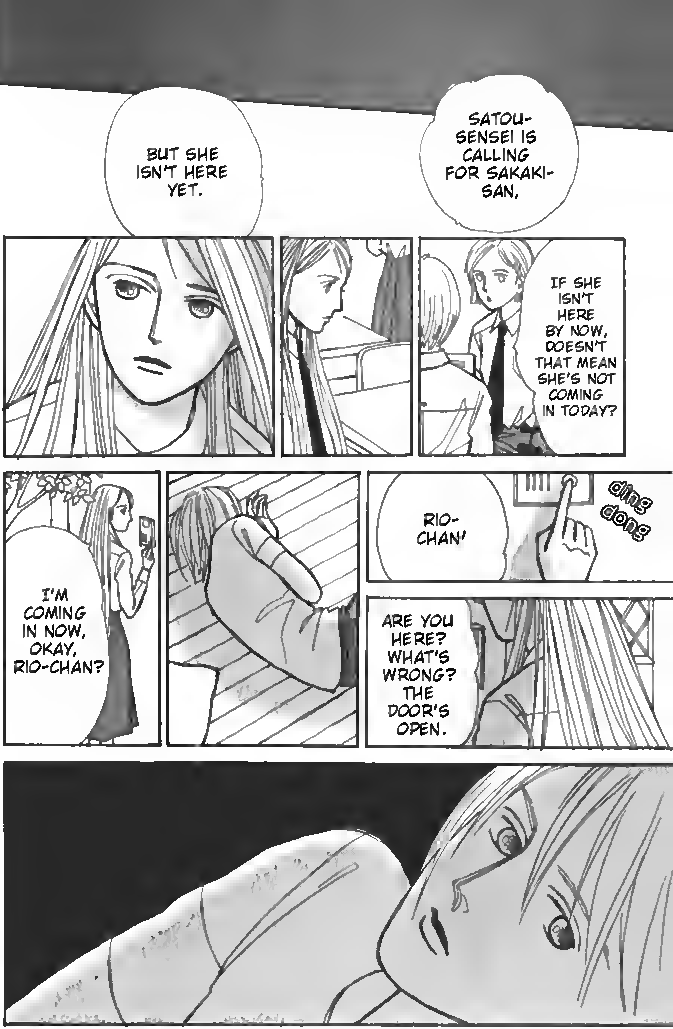
AND OF LOSS.

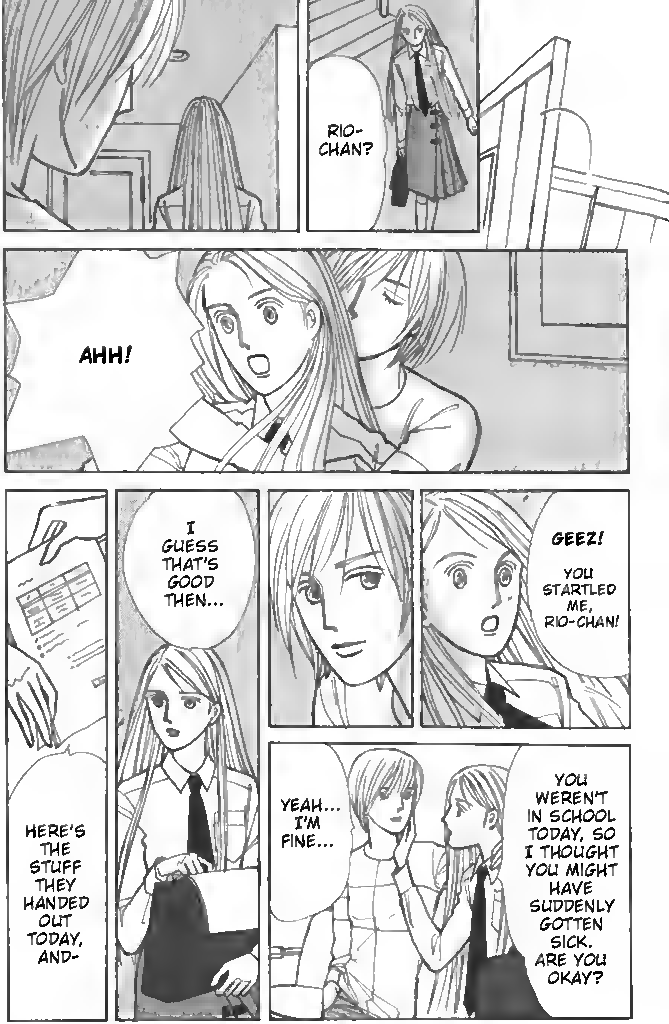


IT'S ALREADY FADING AWAY.

LET ME OUT OF HERE!
HELP!

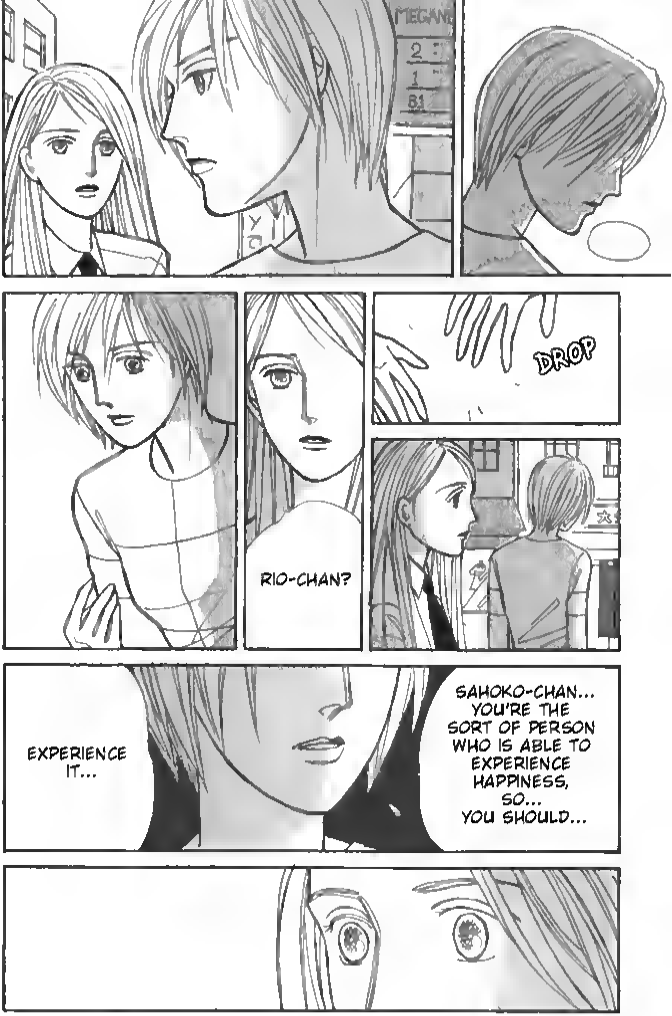

MOM!

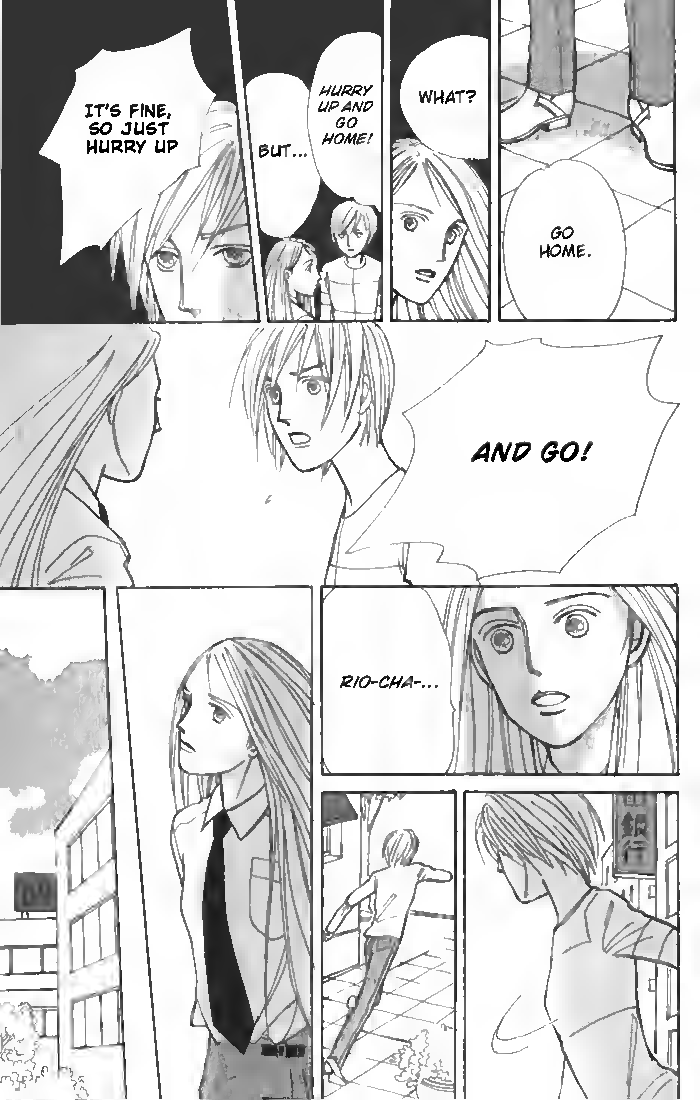

SATOU-SENSEI IS CALLING FOR SAKAKI-SAN.
BUT SHE ISN'T HERE YET.
IF SHE ISN'T HERE BY NOW, DOESN'T THAT MEAN SHE'S NOT COMING IN TODAY?
ding dong
RIO-CHAN!
ARE YOU HERE? WHAT'S WRONG? THE DOOR'S OPEN.
I'M COMING IN NOW, OKAY, RIO-CHAN?


RIO-CHAN?
AHH!
HERE'S THE STUFF THEY HANDED OUT TODAY, AND-
I GUESS THAT'S GOOD THEN...
GEEZ! YOU STARTLED ME, RIO-CHAN!
YEAH... I'M FINE...
YOU WEREN'T IN SCHOOL TODAY, SO I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE SUDDENLY GOTTEN SICK. ARE YOU OKAY?

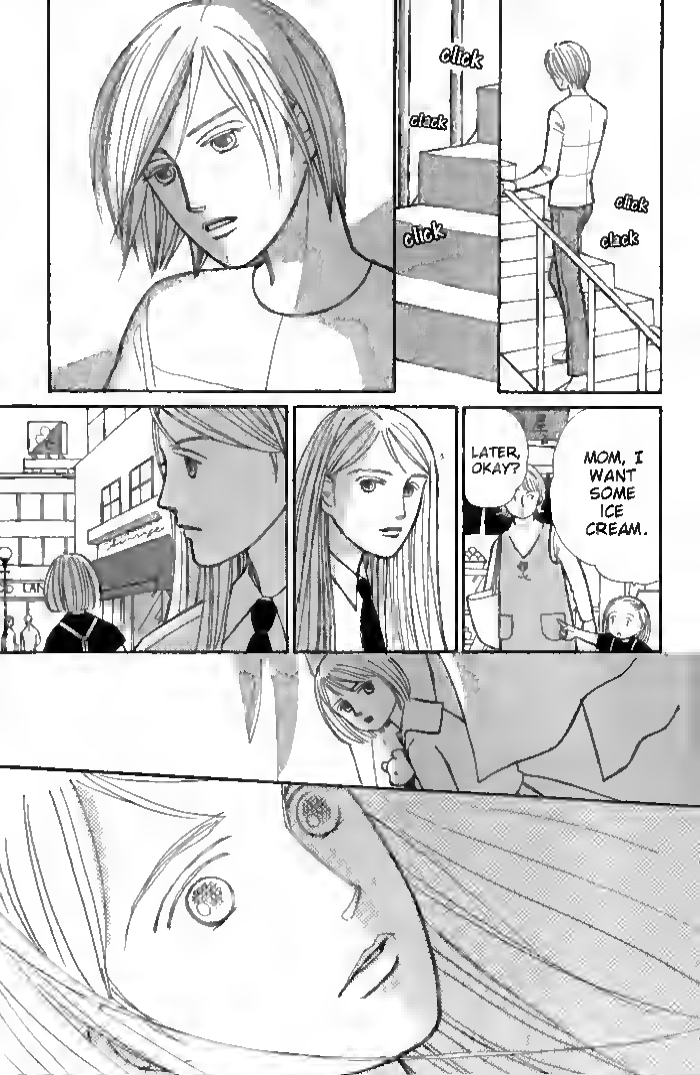
grab
another...
OH, DEAR.
WHAT'S WRONG, RIO-CHAN?
YOU SAID WE'D ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.
YEAH.
YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T GO ANYWHERE.

RIO-CHAN!?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WE DON'T HAVE TO GO SO FAST...
OH, I SEE. YOU WANT TO SURPRISE ME. DID YOU FIND SOMETHING INTERESTING?
SAY, ON OUR WAY BACK LET'S STOP AT MIN-MI PARK. THE OLEANDER THERE IS SO PRETTY. IT'S RARE IN THIS AREA, ISN'T IT? WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOMING IN SUMMER.

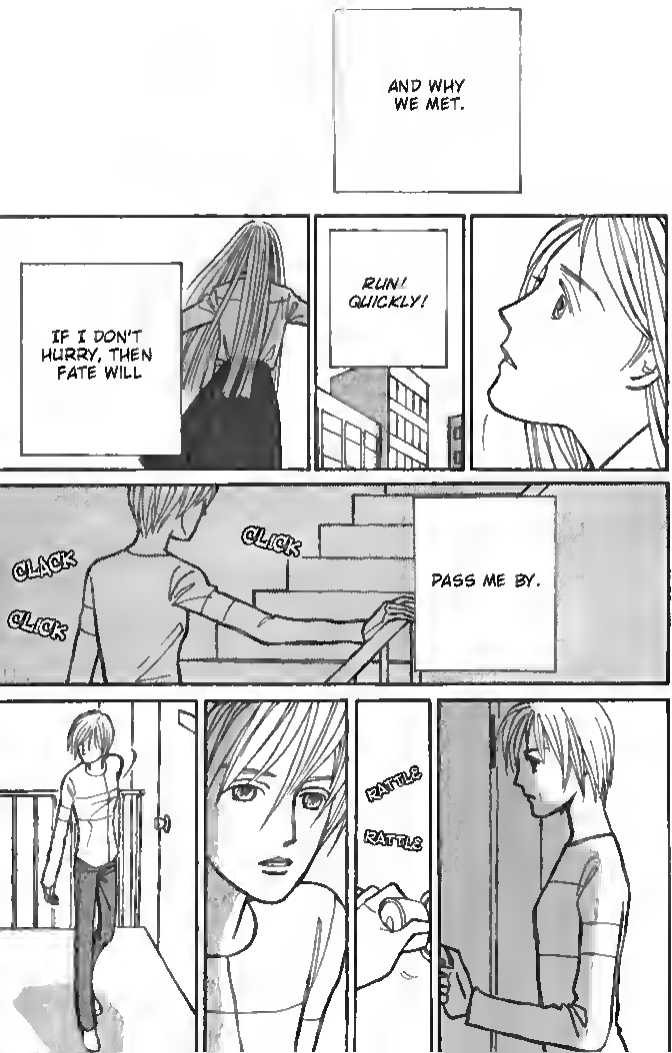

MEGANE
DROP
RIO-CHAN?
SAHOKO-CHAN... YOU'RE THE SORT OF PERSON WHO IS ABLE TO EXPERIENCE HAPPINESS, SO... YOU SHOULD...
EXPERIENCE IT...


GO HOME.
WHAT?
HURRY UP AND GO HOME!
BUT...
IT'S FINE, SO JUST HURRY UP
AND GO!
RIO-CHA-...
銀行

I HAD SOME-THING TO DO HERE...
IT'S UNUSUAL TO SEE YOU AROUND HERE ISN'T YOUR HOUSE IN THE OTHER DIRECTION?
HIGA-SAN!
IT'S SUMMER ALREADY, ISN'T IT?
YOU SHOULD JUST GO HOME EARLY. SEE ALL THOSE CLOUDS OVER THERE? IT MIGHT RAIN TONIGHT.
THAT I FEEL I KNOW THIS SUMMER?
WHY IS IT

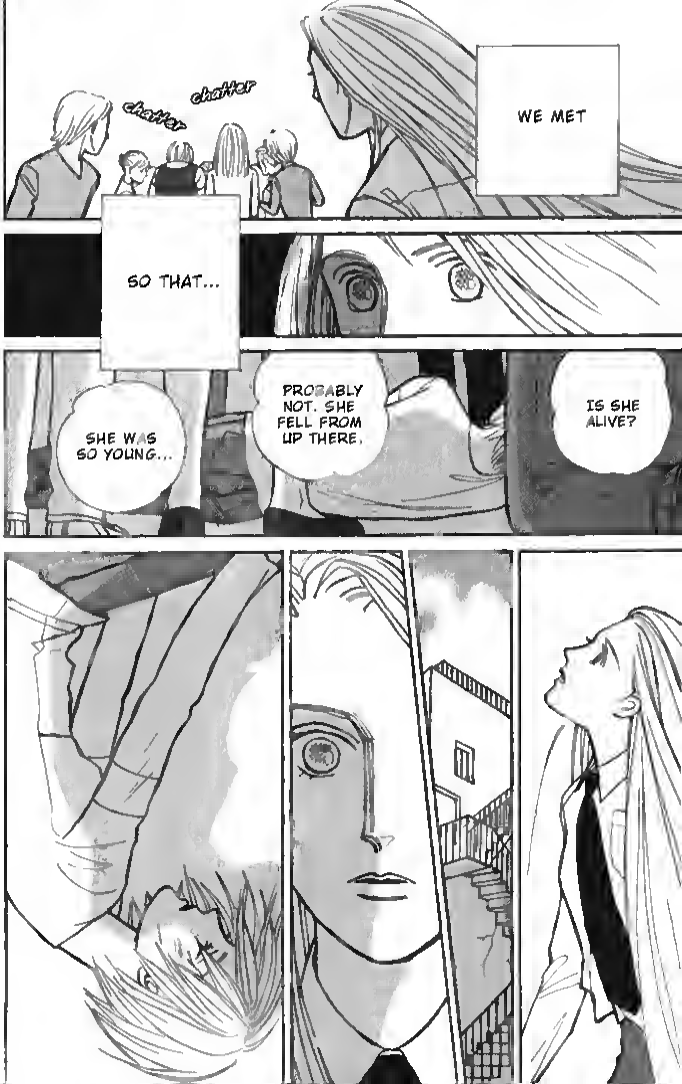

click
clack
click
click
clack
MOM, I WANT SOME ICE CREAM.
LATER, OKAY?

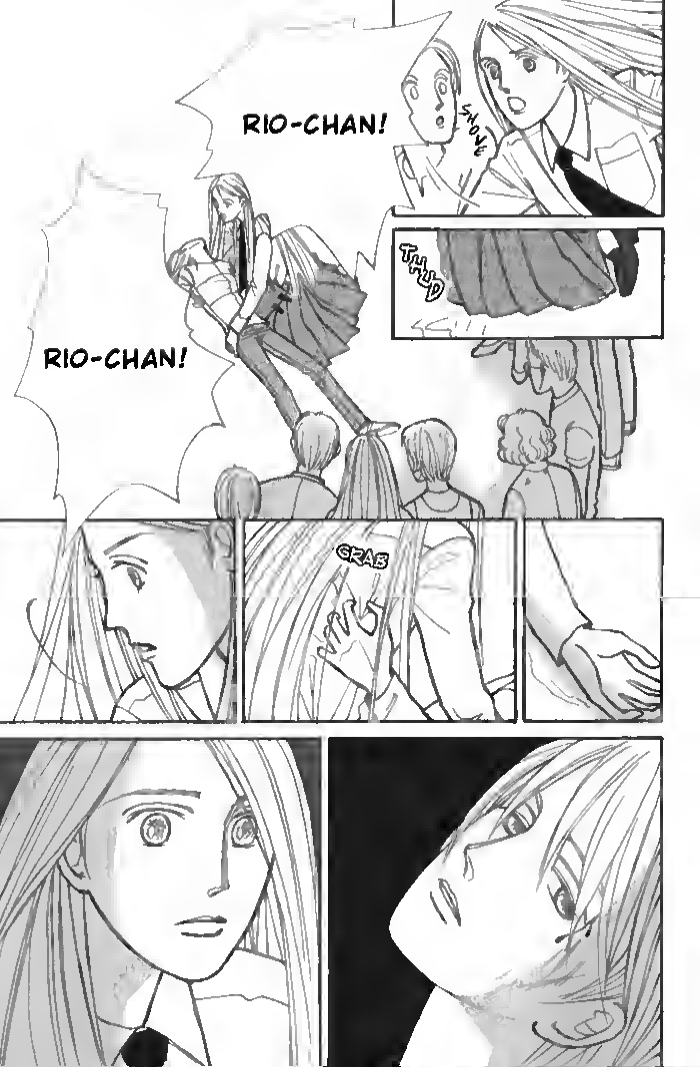
HIGA-SAN?
WHAT'S WRONG, HIGA-SAN?
WHY COULDN'T I REMEMBER BEFORE?
THERE'S A SINGLE REASON WHY I'M HERE ON THIS DAY, AT THIS MOMENT, IN THIS UNIFORM.

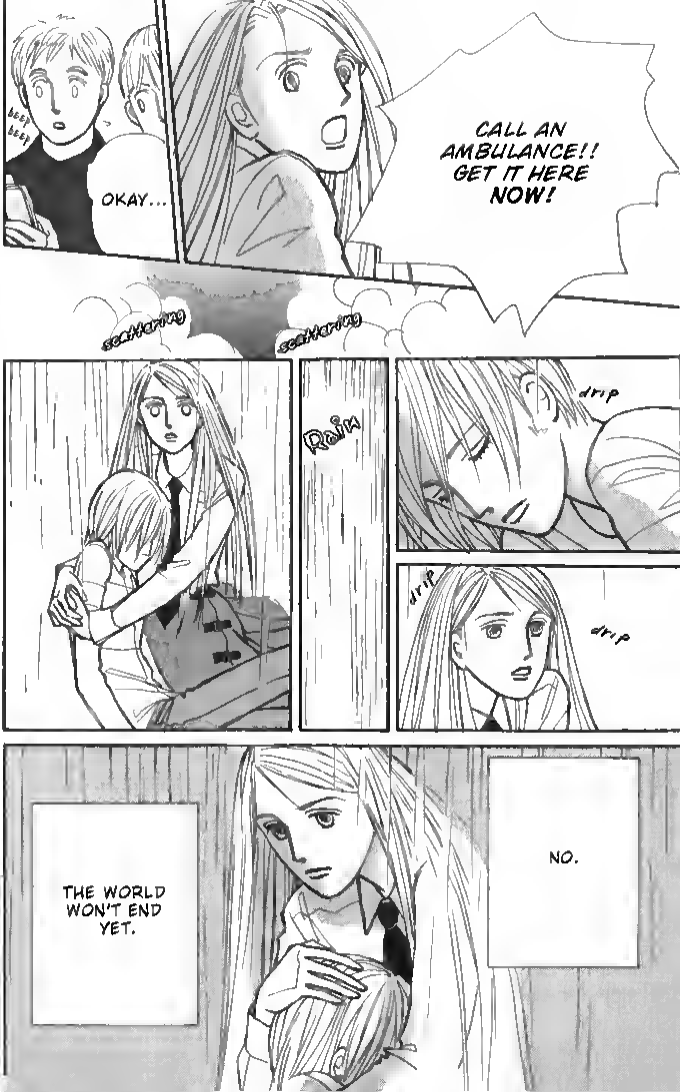

AND WHY WE MET.
IF I DON'T HURRY, THEN FATE WILL
RUN! QUICKLY!
CLACK
CLICK
CLICK
PASS ME BY.
RATTLE
RATTLE

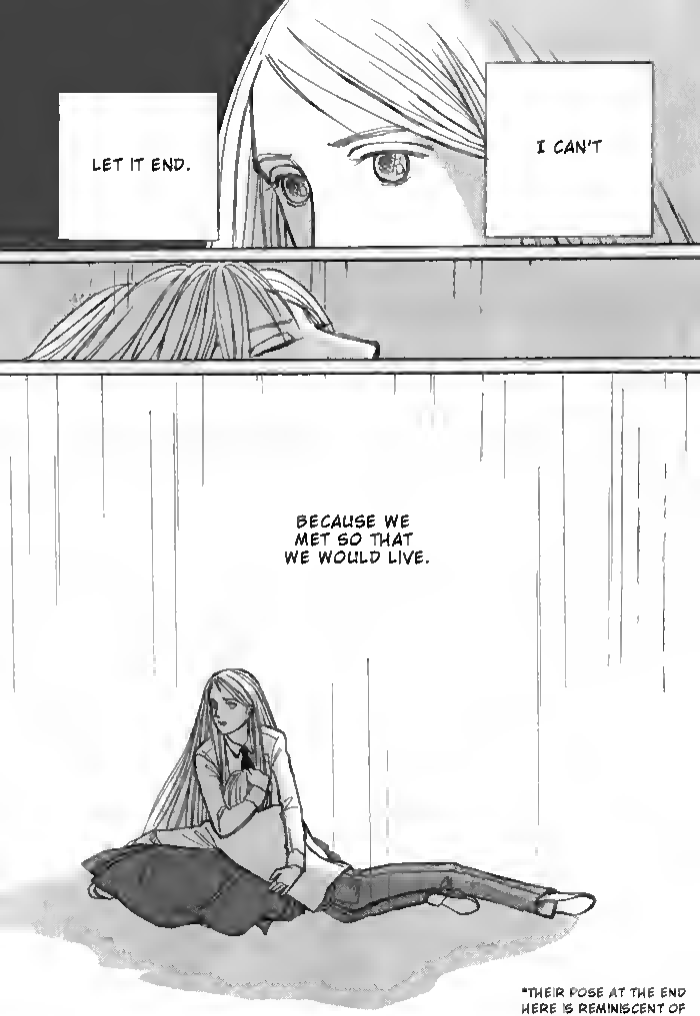
SO THAT WE WOULD BE SAD AND GRIEVE
RIO-CHAN, LISTEN TO ME!
WE DIDN'T MEET

RIO-CHAN...
IT SEEMS IT WAS A GIRL.
SOMEONE JUMPED OFF? HOW FRIGHTENING!
FROM THAT BUILDING?
YES, JUST NOW!


chatter
chatter
WE MET
SO THAT...
IS SHE ALIVE?
PROBABLY NOT. SHE FELL FROM UP THERE.
SHE WAS SO YOUNG...


RIO-CHAN!
SNAP
TRIP
RIO-CHAN!
GRAB


beep beep
OKAY...
CALL AN AMBULANCE!! GET IT HERE NOW!
scurrying
scurrying
Rain
drip
drip
drip
THE WORLD WON'T END YET.
NO.



PIETÀ #3 -END-

*THEIR POSE AT THE END HERE IS REMINISCENT OF MICHELANGELO'S FINISHED PIETÀ SCULPTURE, FROM WHICH THE MANGA LIKELY TAKES ITS NAME

A Lilicious project
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#lilicious@irc.rizon.com

scanned by: Tiny_SnowFairy
Translated by: Sailor Avalon
Edited by: kaba

ピエタ

—pietà

Pieta

by Haruno Nanane

榛野なな恵

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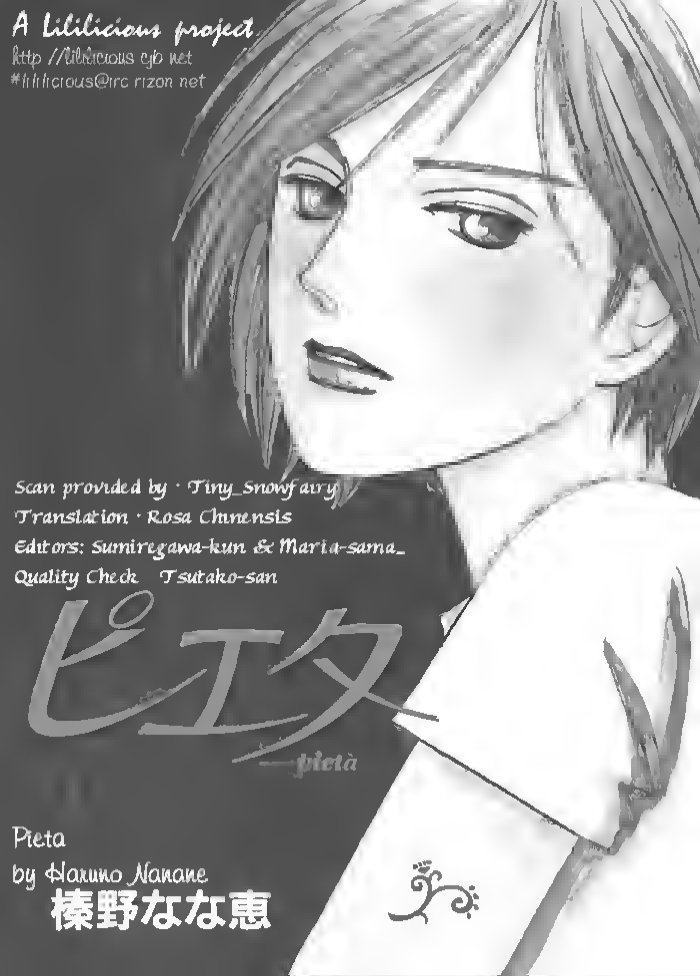

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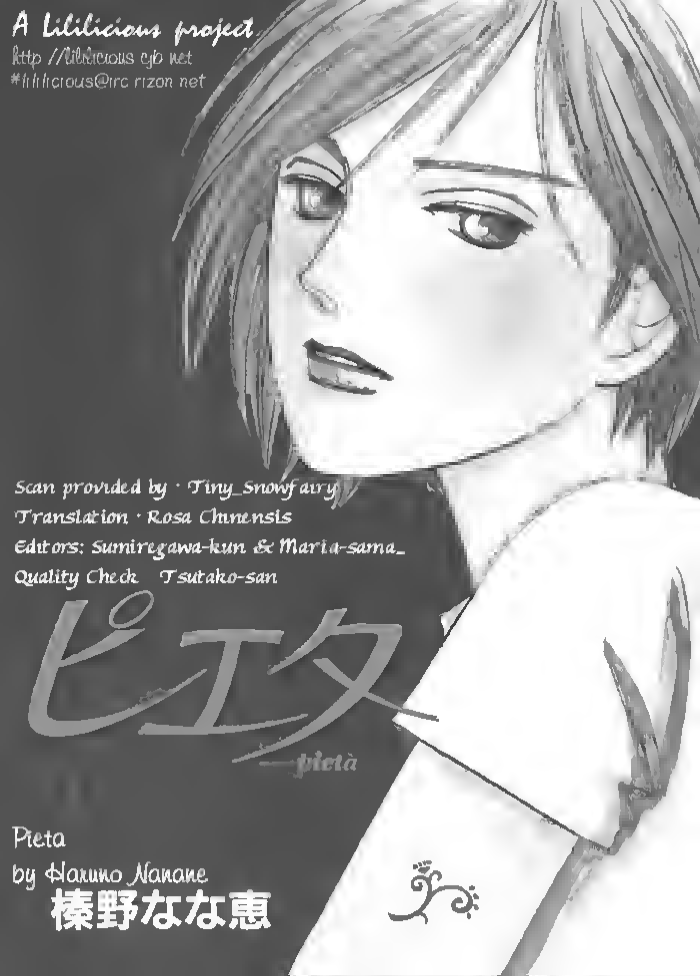

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ピエタ

—pietà

Pieta
by Haruno Nanone
榛野なな恵

ピエタ

pietà

II

榛野な恵

ピエタ

pietà

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コミックス

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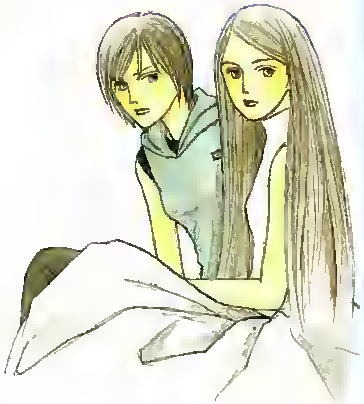
継母・繁子の悪意に追いつめられた理央は、自ら命を絶とうとする。そして佐保子は、理央とふたり、出会った意味に気づいたが――。しのびよる「死」の影をふりはらい、佐保子は理央の傷ついた魂を救えるのか!? 胸を打つ完結巻。少女たちの愛は永遠になる――。



ピエタ —*pietà*— II

榛野な恵

YOUNG YOU COMICS

ピエタII

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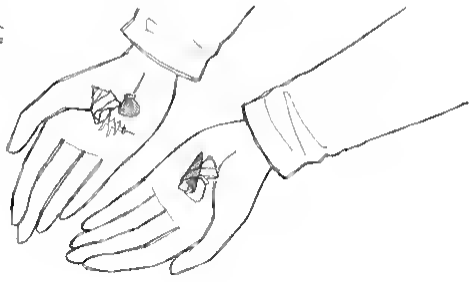
ピエタ

pieta



The trip to the
beginning of it all

somehow got turned around and is heading
toward the future instead

The waves
carry memories
and a gentle premonition.

ピエタ
pietà
＃4

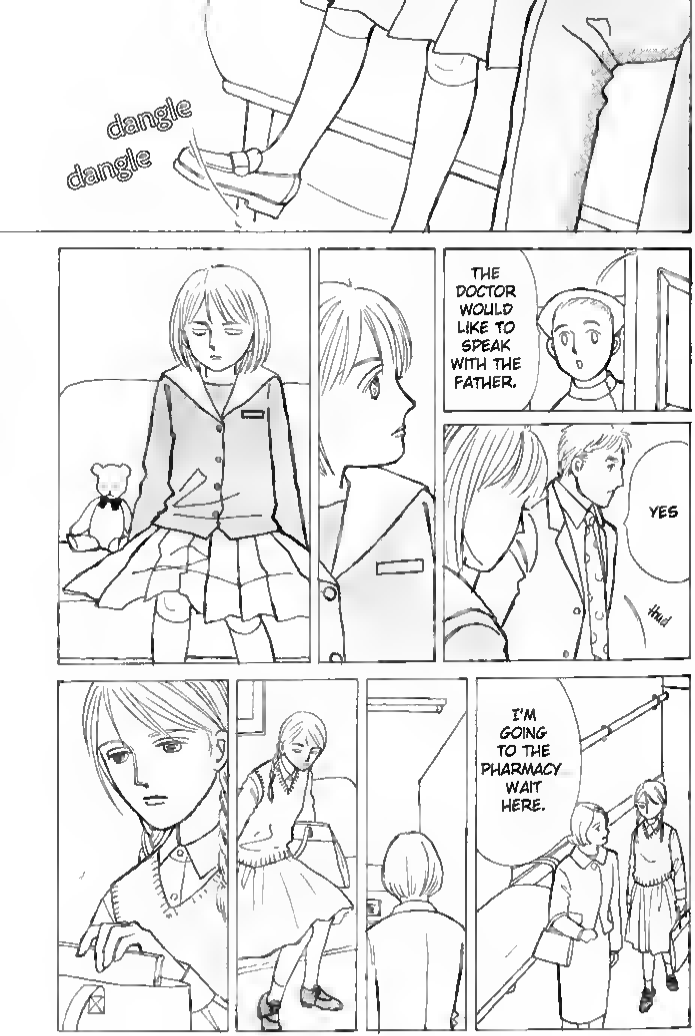
Haruno Nanae

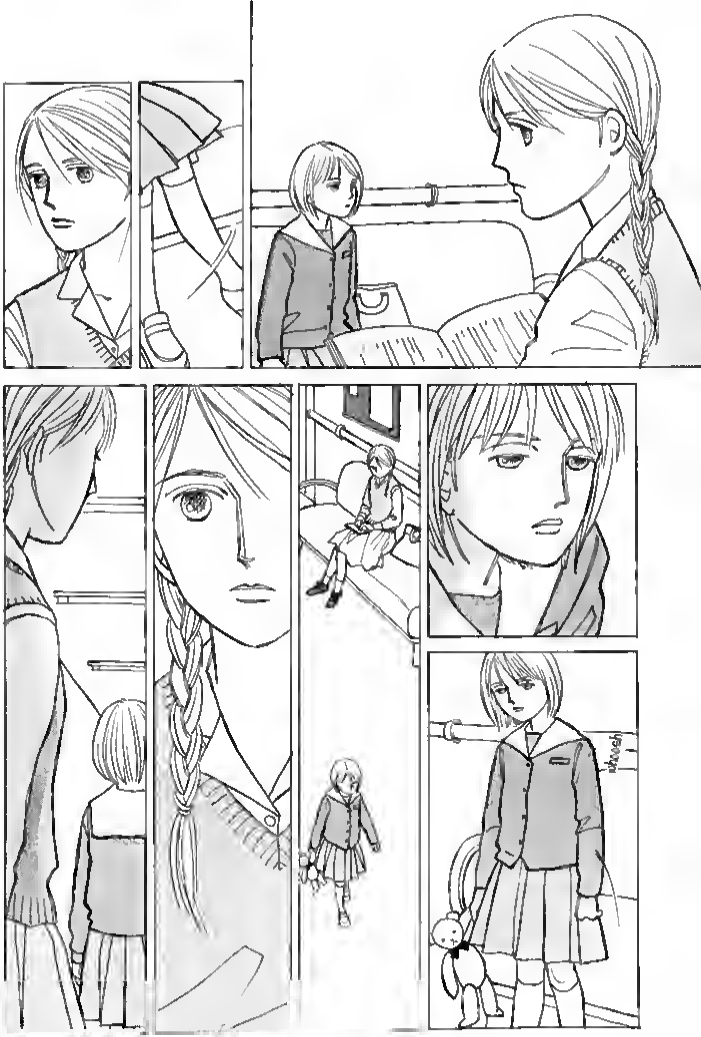
My unicorn,

a silver variation,

shakes its mane

in a vivid gesture of refusal

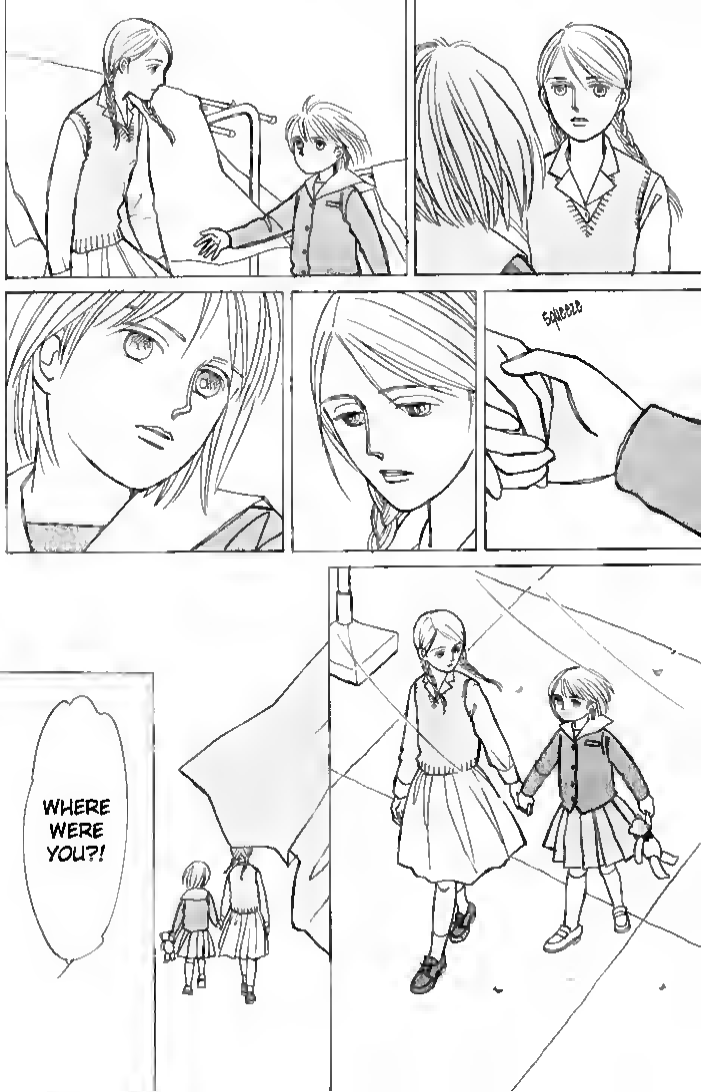

dangle
dangle
THE DOCTOR WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THE FATHER.
YES
I'M GOING TO THE PHARMACY WAIT HERE.

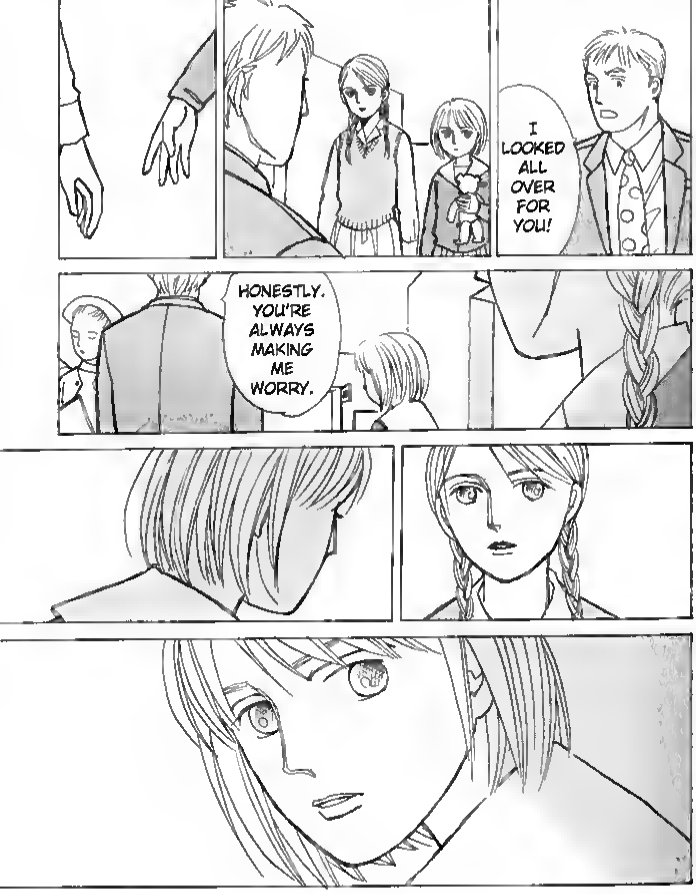

shush

Whoosh
EMERGENCY EXIT
rustle

waver
clack
click

lift


SQUEEZE
WHERE WERE YOU?!



A long time ago

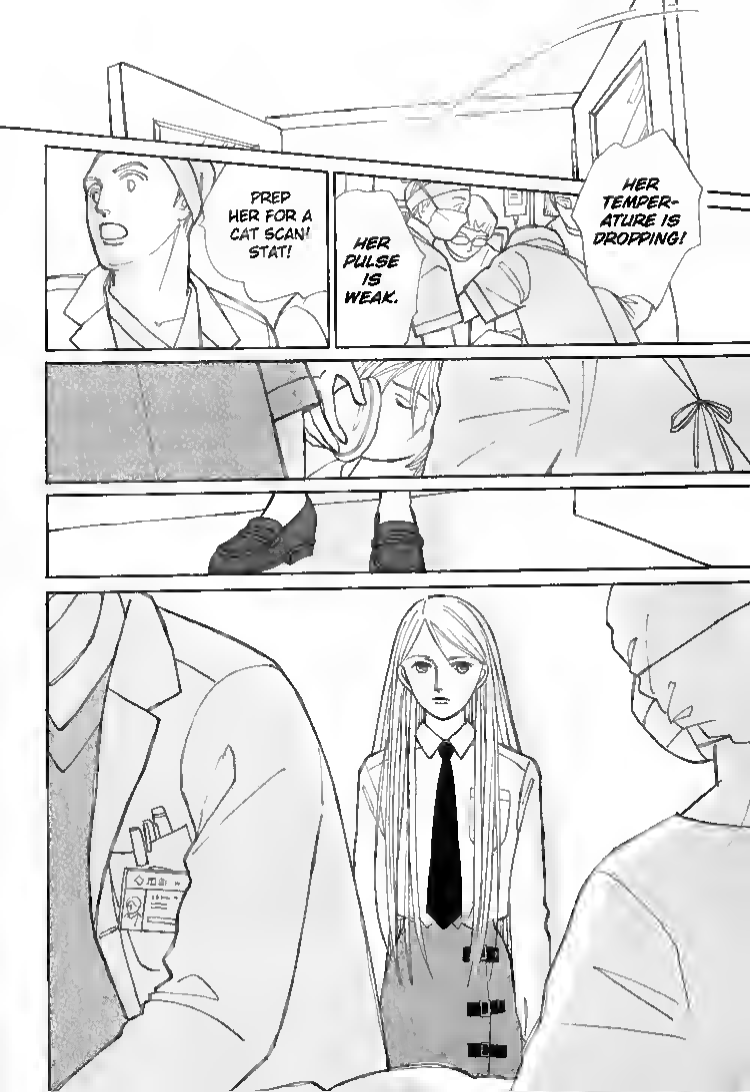
long, long ago.

we met at sea

back
before it was called that

I had been thinking
that we would meet again

creak
creak
OPEN THAT DOOR!
PLEASE MOVE! WE'RE ADMITTING SOMEONE!
WHAT'S HER CONDITION?!


PREP HER FOR A CAT SCAN! STAT!
HER PULSE IS WEAK.
HER TEMPER-ATURE IS DROPPING!

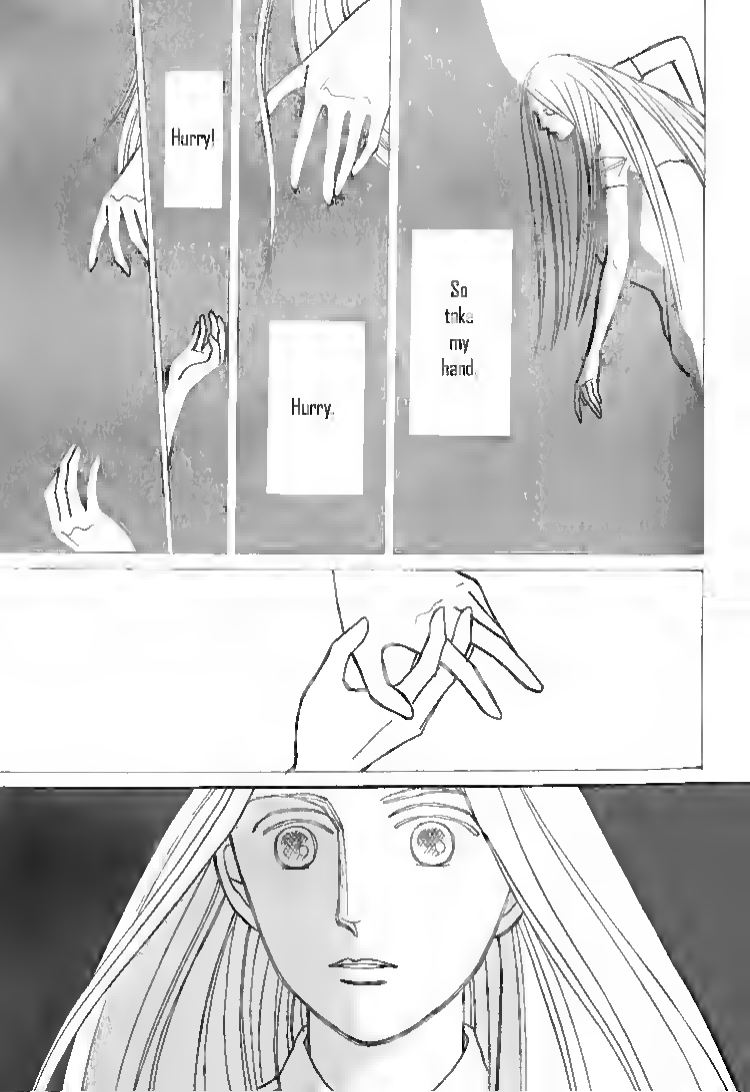
I'M SORRY, BUT PLEASE WAIT OUTSIDE!
ARE YOU HER FRIEND? DID YOU COME HERE WITH HER?!
THANK GOODNESS! I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU, PLEASE COME THIS WAY!
--YES ...

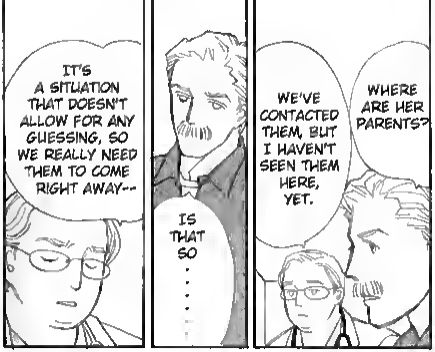
YES, MINORI SPEAKING.
CLICK
R R R R R R R R...
YES, IT'S ME. YES.
WHAT?
.....
I UNDER-STAND.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
beep beep
OH, KYOUKO, IT'S ME.
--I JUST GOT A CALL FROM X HOSPITAL..... RIO-CHAN...
TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.-- SHE JUMPED FROM A BUILDING... YES..... THEY SAID SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS.
--NO, I DON'T KNOW. I'M GOING OVER THERE RIGHT NOW.
YES, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.

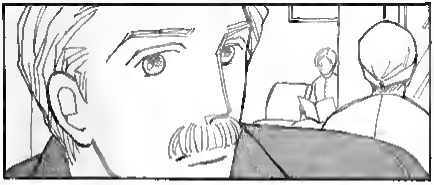
Everything is all right.

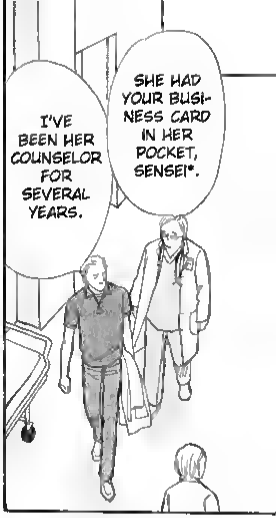
It's all right.

There's no way you're going to disappear, as long as I'm here like this
We share the same space
so it shouldn't be possible for one of us to begin or end her life without the other
This conviction is strong
It's stronger than death
Definitely.

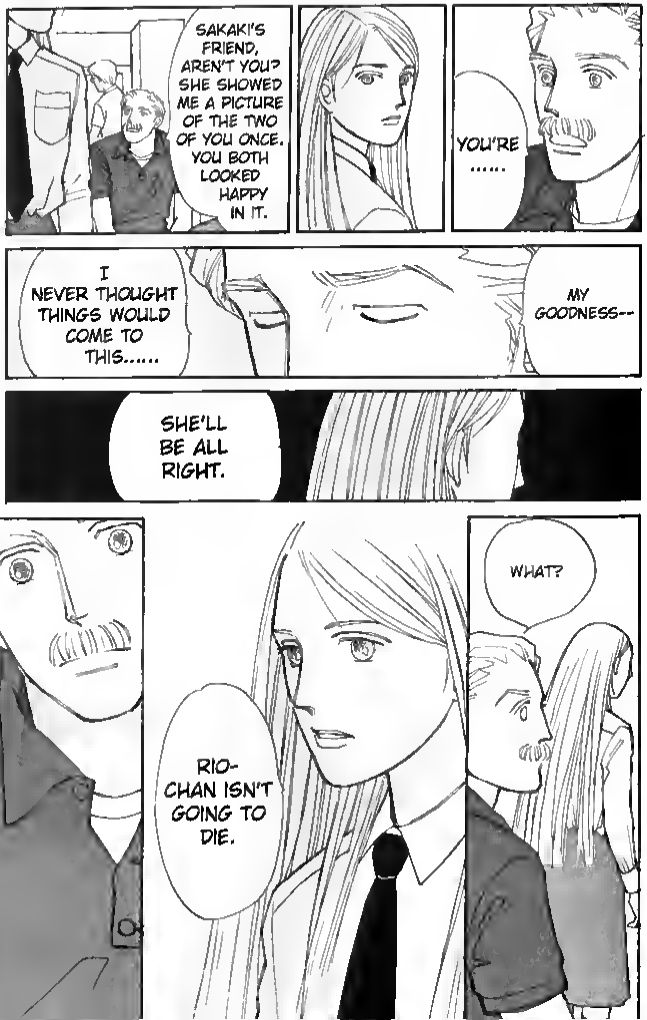

Hurry!
Hurry.
So take my hand.

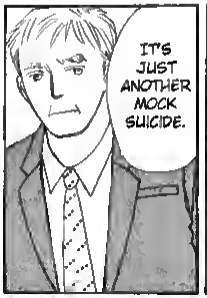

IT'S A SITUATION THAT DOESN'T ALLOW FOR ANY GUESSING, SO WE REALLY NEED THEM TO COME RIGHT AWAY---
IS THAT SO.....
WE'VE CONTACTED THEM, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM HERE, YET.
WHERE ARE HER PARENTS?

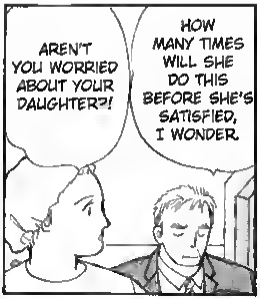


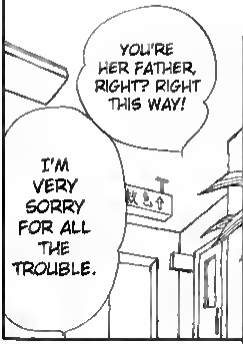


-:NOTE "SENSEI" IS THE TITLE USED TO ADDRESS DOCTORS.:-


SAKAKI'S FRIEND, AREN'T YOU? SHE SHOWED ME A PICTURE OF THE TWO OF YOU ONCE. YOU BOTH LOOKED HAPPY IN IT.
YOU'RE .....
I NEVER THOUGHT THINGS WOULD COME TO THIS.....
MY GOODNESS--
SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
WHAT?
RIO-CHAN ISN'T GOING TO DIE.

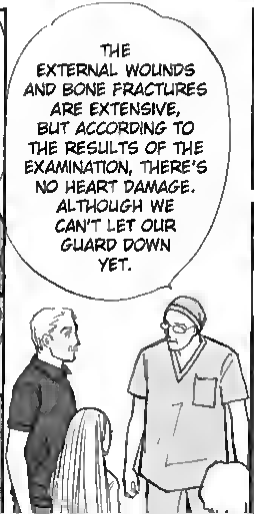

IT'S JUST ANOTHER MOCK SUICIDE.

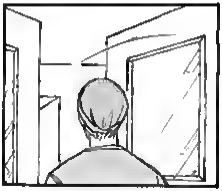

AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER?!
HOW MANY TIMES WILL SHE DO THIS BEFORE SHE'S SATISFIED, I WONDER.


YOU'RE HER FATHER, RIGHT? RIGHT THIS WAY!
I'M VERY SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE.

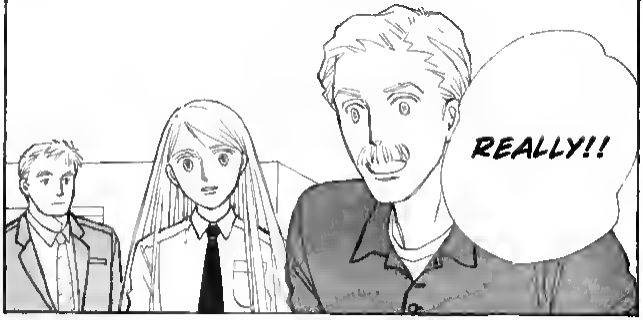
OH... NO.....

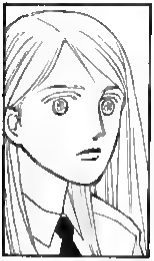
I CAN TELL YOU THAT SHE IS CURRENTLY OUT OF DANGER.


THE EXTERNAL WOUNDS AND BONE FRACTURES ARE EXTENSIVE, BUT ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION, THERE'S NO HEART DAMAGE. ALTHOUGH WE CAN'T LET OUR GUARD DOWN YET.



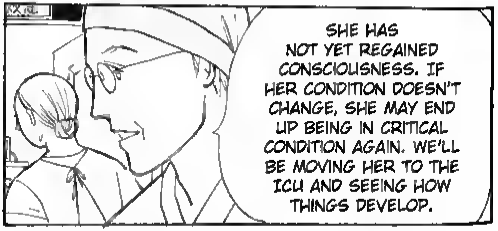
SENSEI! HOW IS SAKAKI-KUN?!


REALLY!!



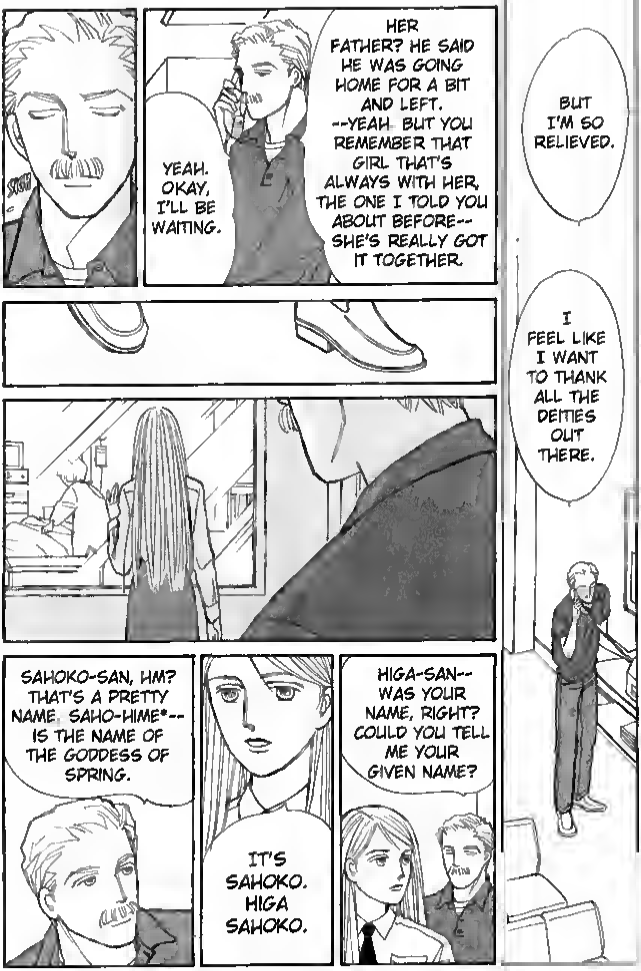
HOWEVER,
THANK GOODNESS. THANK GOODNESS! THANK YOU, SENSEI!

YEAH.-- HE SAID IT WAS "JUST FOR THE TIME BEING,"

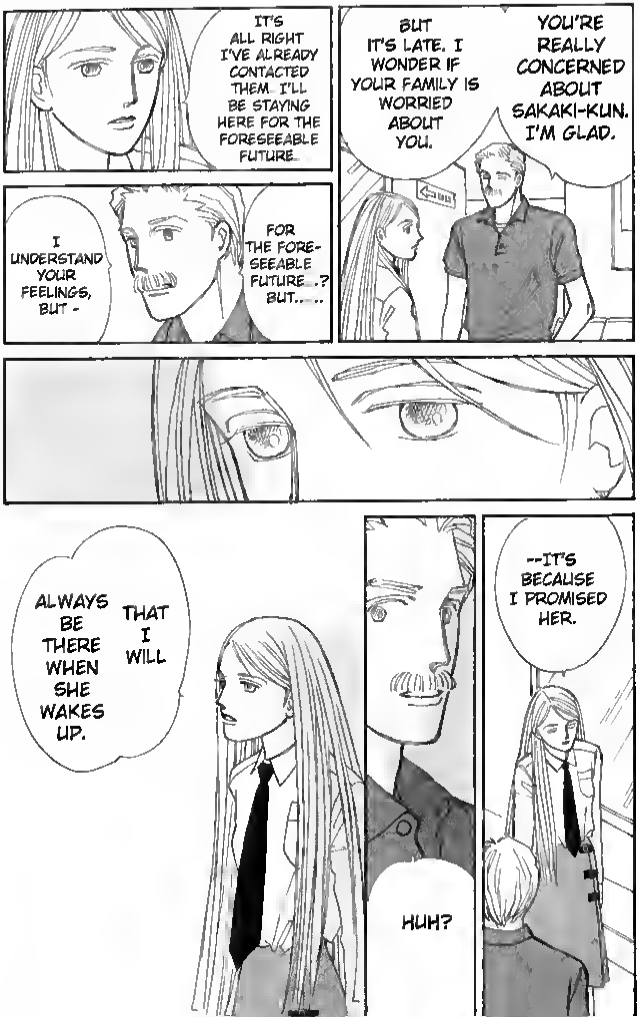

SHE HAS NOT YET REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. IF HER CONDITION DOESN'T CHANGE, SHE MAY END UP BEING IN CRITICAL CONDITION AGAIN. WE'LL BE MOVING HER TO THE ICU AND SEEING HOW THINGS DEVELOP.

THAT WOULD BE A PROBLEM FOR ME.

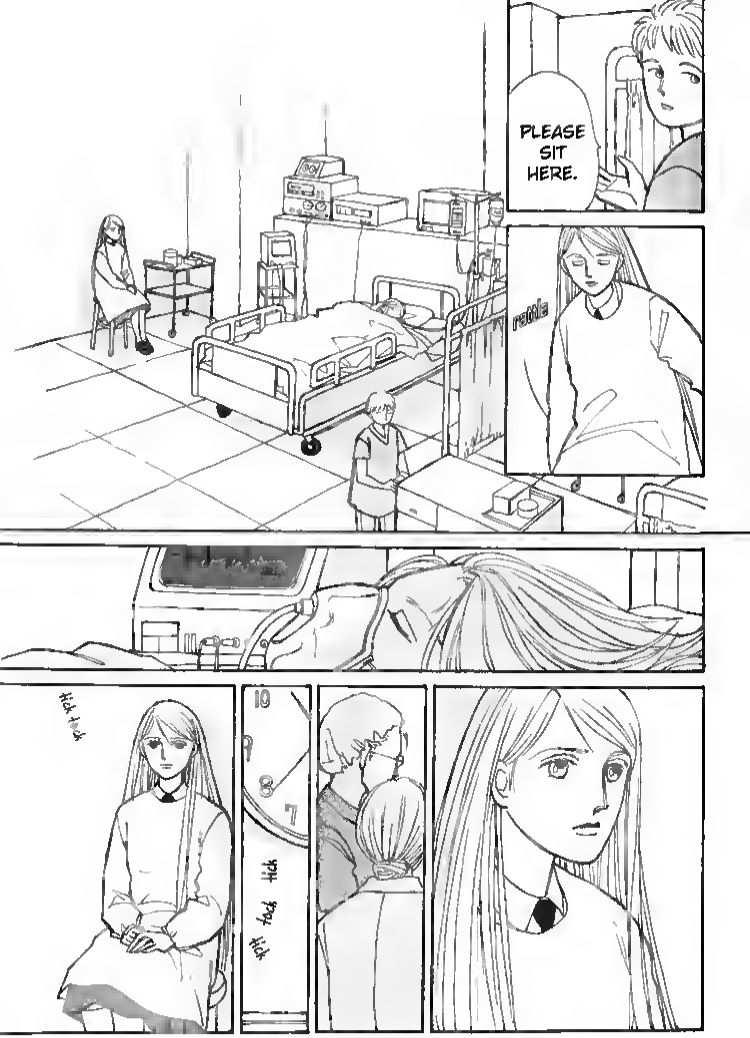
YOU'RE NOT SAYING THAT SHE COULD STAY LIKE THIS FOR-EVER, ARE YOU?


YEAH. OKAY, I'LL BE WAITING.
HER FATHER? HE SAID HE WAS GOING HOME FOR A BIT AND LEFT.
--YEAH. BUT YOU REMEMBER THAT GIRL THAT'S ALWAYS WITH HER, THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT BEFORE-- SHE'S REALLY GOT IT TOGETHER.
BUT I'M SO RELIEVED.
I FEEL LIKE I WANT TO THANK ALL THE DEITIES OUT THERE.
SAHOKO-SAN, HM? THAT'S A PRETTY NAME. SAHO-HIME*-- IS THE NAME OF THE GODDESS OF SPRING.
IT'S SAHOKO. HIGA SAHOKO.
HIGA-SAN-- WAS YOUR NAME, RIGHT? COULD YOU TELL ME YOUR GIVEN NAME?

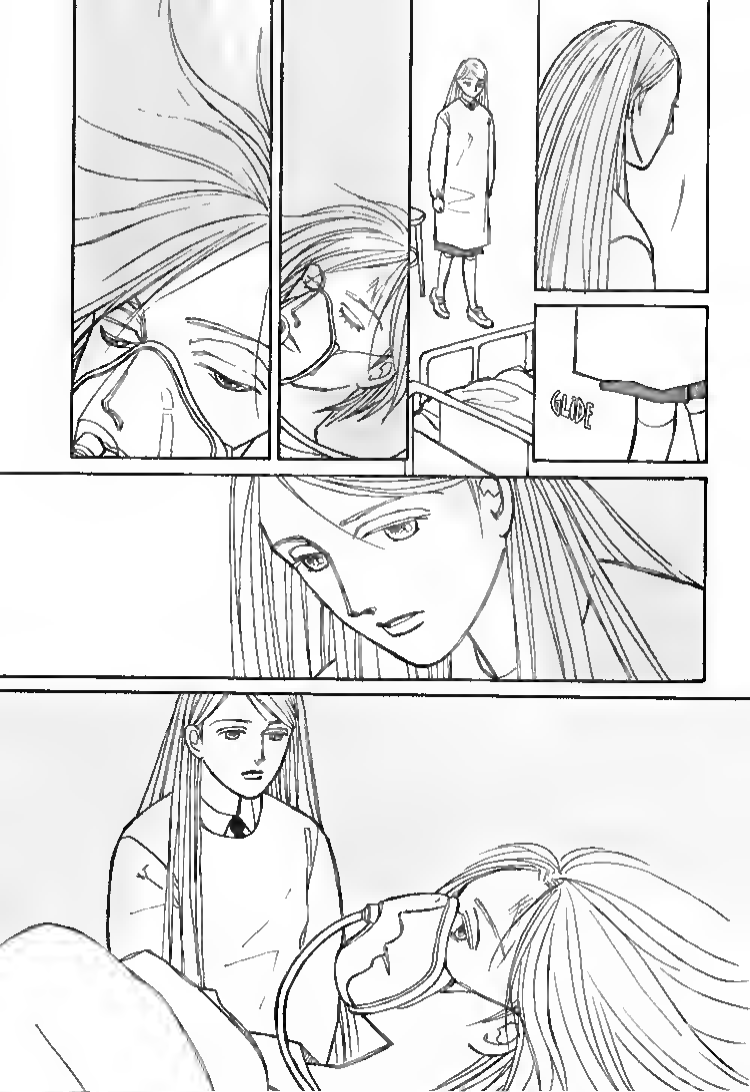
-:NOTE - THE "HIME" SUFFIX MEANS "PRINCESS." INCIDENTALLY, SAHO-HIME IS ALSO A NAME FOR THE FLOWER PAEONIA SUFFRUTICOSA :-

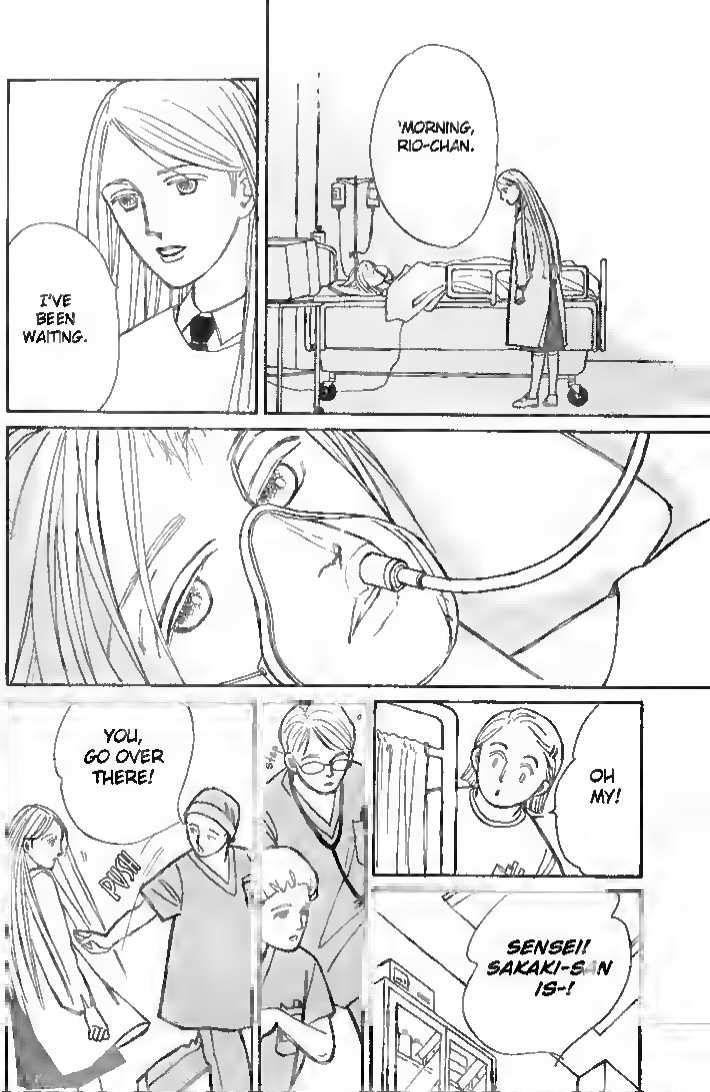

IT'S ALL RIGHT I'VE ALREADY CONTACTED THEM. I'LL BE STAYING HERE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
BUT IT'S LATE. I WONDER IF YOUR FAMILY IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
YOU'RE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT SAKAKI-KUN. I'M GLAD.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, BUT -
FOR THE FORE-SEEABLE FUTURE...? BUT.....
--IT'S BECAUSE I PROMISED HER.
HUH?
ALWAYS BE THERE WHEN SHE WAKES UP.
THAT I WILL

HIGA-SAN!
OH, PLEASE EXCUSE ME.
.....
THEY'VE GIVEN YOU SPECIAL PERMISSION TO GO IN.
step
THANK YOU!!


PLEASE SIT HERE.
reiiiko
tick tock
tick tock tick

beep
beep
beep

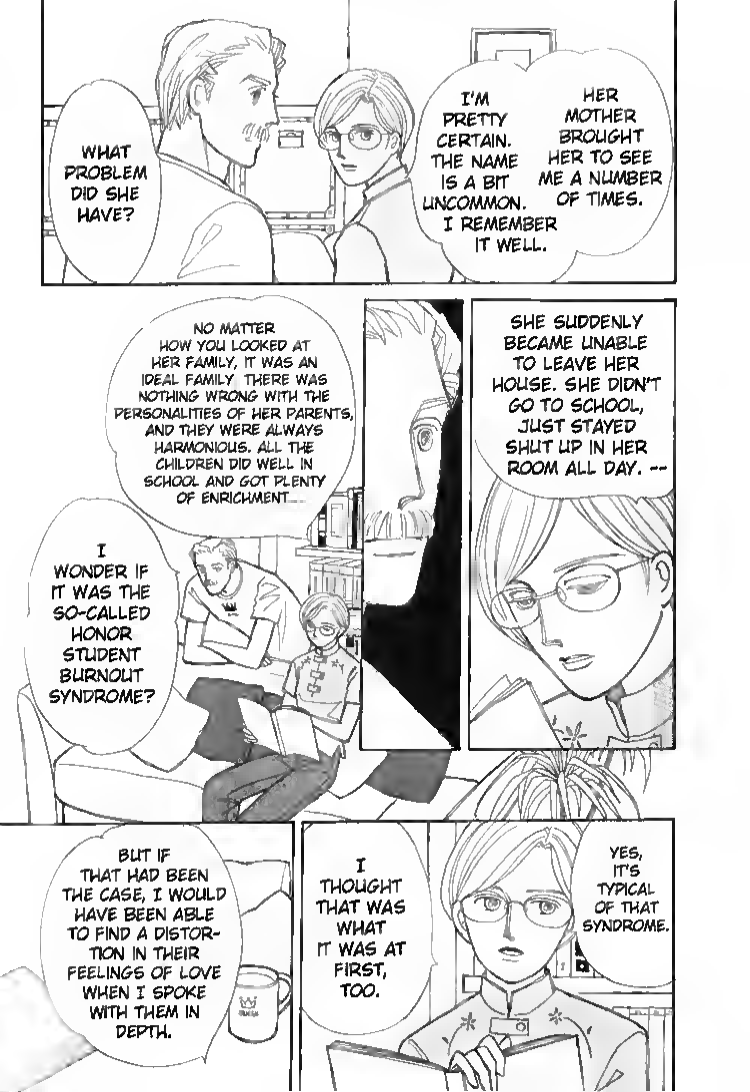

GLIDE


I'VE BEEN WAITING.
'MORNING, RIO-CHAN.
YOU, GO OVER THERE!
PUSH
OH MY!
SENSEI! SAKAKI-SAN IS-!

SLAM
HUH?
THUD

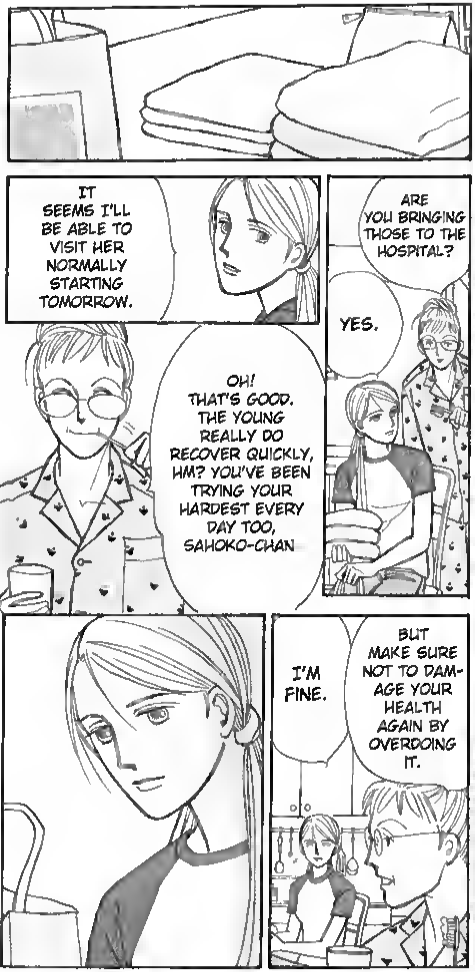
Doctor!
Please help!
Wait!
HEY, YOU! WHAT'S WRONG?!
OH, MY!
WH- WHAT HAPPENED?!
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?!
Hm?

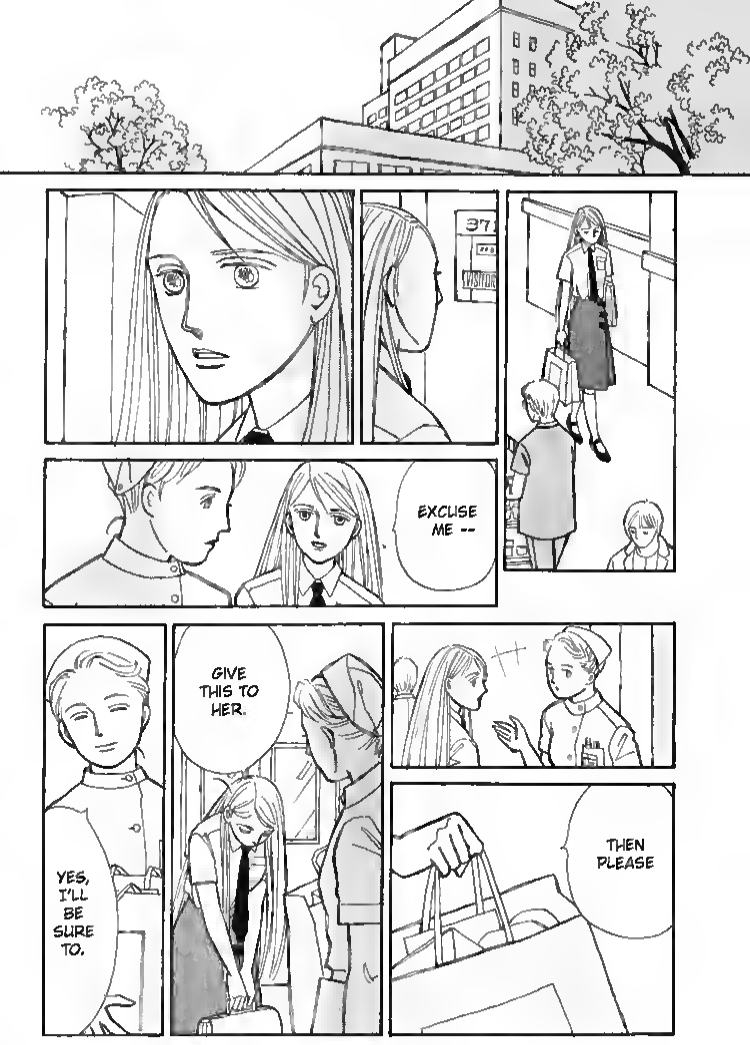
I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAD A MEETING AT A TIME LIKE THIS, THAT PREVENTED ME FROM COMING RIGHT AWAY!
ULTIMATELY, I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HER EITHER.
WHAT ABOUT THAT GIRL?
SHE'S RESTING FOR A BIT. THEY HAVE HER ON AN IV.
THE POOR THING, SHE PROBABLY STRAINED BOTH HER MIND AND BODY QUITE A BIT.
HER NAME IS HIGA-SAN. I THINK WE'LL PROBABLY BE SEEING A LOT OF HER FROM NOW ON, SO LET'S TRY TO REMEMBER HER NAME.
.....HIGA?
WAIT A MINUTE!
YEAH. UM, HIGA SAHOKO...
flip
flip
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

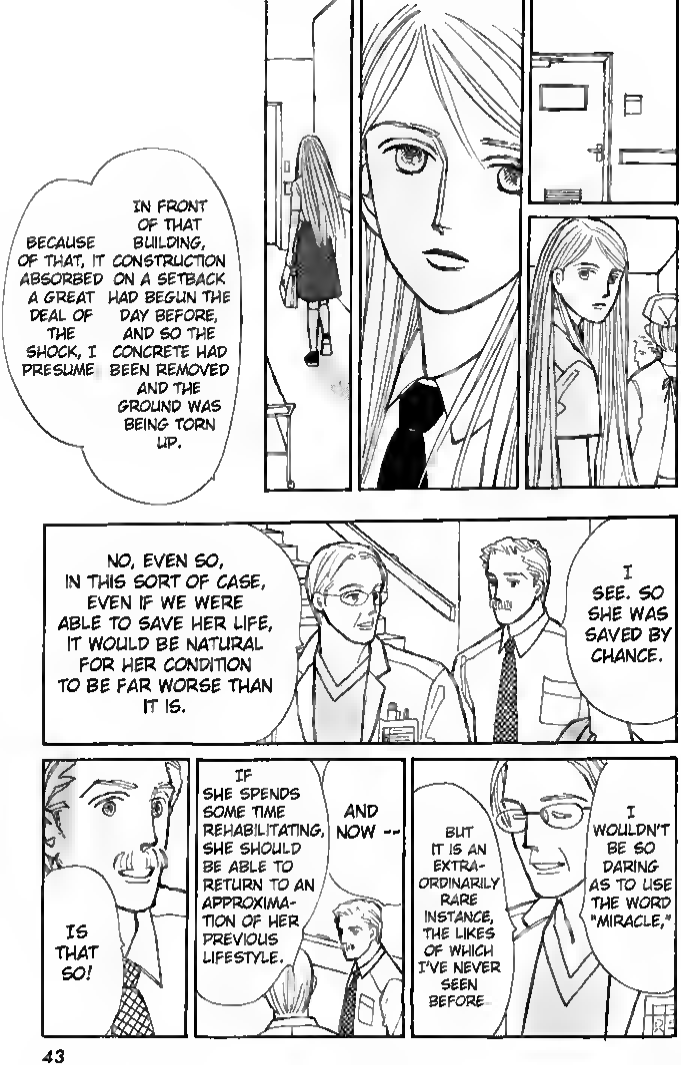

WHAT PROBLEM DID SHE HAVE?
I'M PRETTY CERTAIN. THE NAME IS A BIT UNCOMMON. I REMEMBER IT WELL.
HER MOTHER BROUGHT HER TO SEE ME A NUMBER OF TIMES.
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOKED AT HER FAMILY, IT WAS AN IDEAL FAMILY. THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE PERSONALITIES OF HER PARENTS, AND THEY WERE ALWAYS HARMONIOUS. ALL THE CHILDREN DID WELL IN SCHOOL AND GOT PLENTY OF ENRICHMENT.....
I WONDER IF IT WAS THE SO-CALLED HONOR STUDENT BURNOUT SYNDROME?
SHE SUDDENLY BECAME UNABLE TO LEAVE HER HOUSE. SHE DIDN'T GO TO SCHOOL, JUST STAYED SHUT UP IN HER ROOM ALL DAY. --
BUT IF THAT HAD BEEN THE CASE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND A DISTORTION IN THEIR FEELINGS OF LOVE WHEN I SPOKE WITH THEM IN DEPTH.
I THOUGHT THAT WAS WHAT IT WAS AT FIRST, TOO.
YES, IT'S TYPICAL OF THAT SYNDROME.

SO MUCH SO THAT THEY DIDN'T NEED MY ADVICE.
HOWEVER, THAT FAMILY WAS DIFFERENT. THEY CARED FOR EACH OTHER, FROM THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS.
IF I WERE TO DESCRIBE IT, I'D SAY IT WAS A PROBLEM OF COM-PATIBILITY.
AND SO I CHANGED MY MIND. NOBODY WAS TO BLAME FOR THIS.
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME!
SOUNDS LIKE US.
Yeah Yeah
NO, NOTHING.
WHAT?
HER SENSITIVITY WAS DIFFERENT, HM...?
AN ENVIRONMENT THAT THE TYPICAL CHILD WOULD THRIVE IN WAS JUST A BURDEN TO HER, BECAUSE HER SENSITIVITY WAS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF HER PARENTS AND OTHER ORDINARY PEOPLE. --
COMPA-TIBILITY?
KING
SO? WAS THE SITUATION IMPROVED?

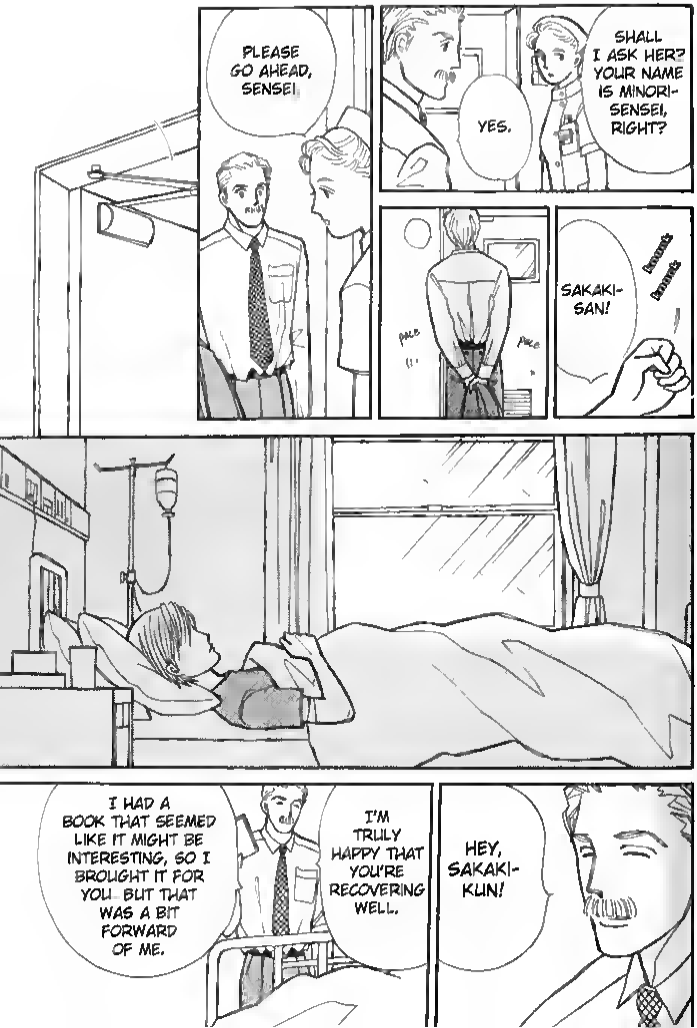
?
--BUT THE TRUTH IS, I WASN'T THAT WORRIED ABOUT HER.
JUST AS I THOUGHT, I GOT A LETTER FROM HER MOTHER HALF A YEAR LATER SAYING THAT HER BEHAVIORAL RANGE WAS INCREASING.
I JUST RECOMMENDED THAT THEY TRY LITERALLY PUTTING SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM, SO THAT SHE WOULDN'T RUN HERSELF INTO THE GROUND DUE TO THE RESPONSIBILITY SHE FELT BECAUSE OF THEM.
LIKE AN UNDERGROUND WATER VEIN, IT EXISTS INSIDE HER, READY TO BECOME A GREAT POWER IN HER TIME OF NEED.
BECAUSE WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, SHE GREW UP RECEIVING PLENTY OF LOVE FROM HER PARENTS. --
WOW, WHAT A COIN-CIDENCE.
WHAT A SURPRISE! RIO-CHAN WAS GOING TO THE HOSPITAL DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD.
HM?
OH?
IT COULDN'T BE.
I WONDER IF THEY'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE THEN?

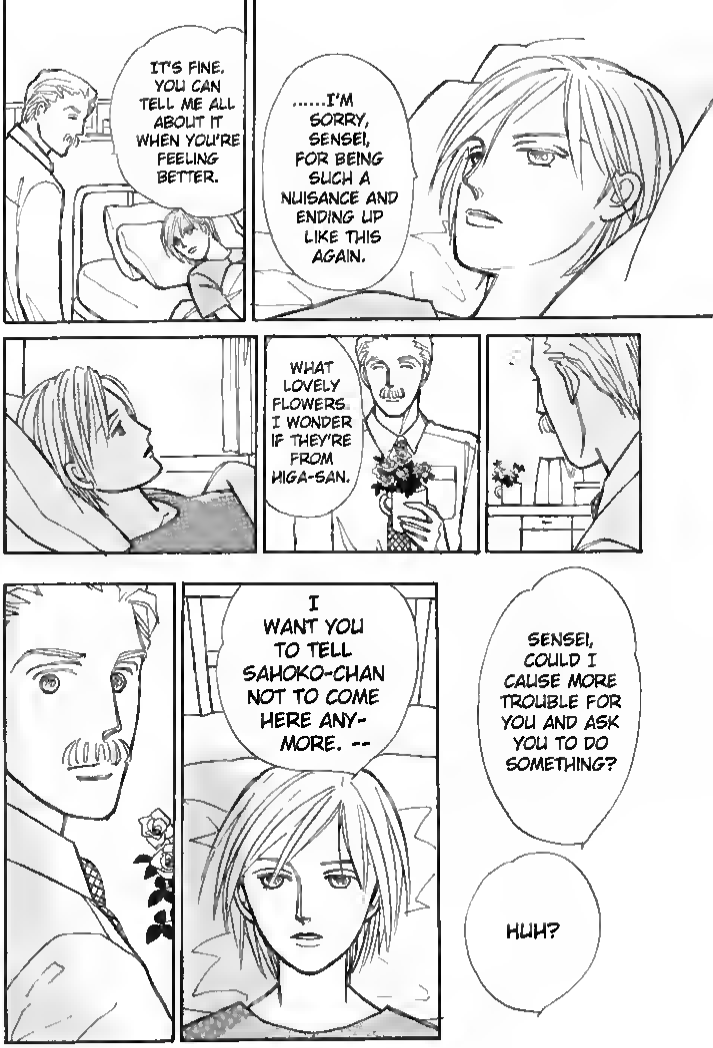

BUT.....
MAYBE.....
IT SEEMS I'LL BE ABLE TO VISIT HER NORMALLY STARTING TOMORROW.
ARE YOU BRINGING THOSE TO THE HOSPITAL?
YES.
OH! THAT'S GOOD. THE YOUNG REALLY DO RECOVER QUICKLY, HM? YOU'VE BEEN TRYING YOUR HARDEST EVERY DAY TOO, SAHOKO-CHAN
I'M FINE.
BUT MAKE SURE NOT TO DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH AGAIN BY OVERDOING IT.


EXCUSE ME --
GIVE THIS TO HER.
YES, I'LL BE SURE TO.
THEN PLEASE


IN FRONT OF THAT BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION ON A SETBACK HAD BEGUN THE DAY BEFORE, AND SO THE CONCRETE HAD BEEN REMOVED AND THE GROUND WAS BEING TORN UP.
BECAUSE OF THAT, IT ABSORBED A GREAT DEAL OF THE SHOCK, I PRESUME
I SEE. SO SHE WAS SAVED BY CHANCE.
NO, EVEN SO, IN THIS SORT OF CASE, EVEN IF WE WERE ABLE TO SAVE HER LIFE, IT WOULD BE NATURAL FOR HER CONDITION TO BE FAR WORSE THAN IT IS.
I WOULDN'T BE SO DARING AS TO USE THE WORD "MIRACLE,"
BUT IT IS AN EXTRA-ORDINARILY RARE INSTANCE, THE LIKES OF WHICH I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE
AND NOW --
IF SHE SPENDS SOME TIME REHABILITATING, SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO AN APPROXIMA-TION OF HER PREVIOUS LIFESTYLE.
IS THAT SO!

THAT'S FUNNY. SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE VISITORS NOW.....
371
HM?
HER PARENTS ONLY CAME ONCE, TO DELIVER NECESSITIES. SAKAKI-SAN REALLY SHOULD SEE THAT GIRL!
WHAT?!
SHE COMES EVERY DAY. SHE'S SO THOUGHTFUL! SHE'S CHANGED THE IMAGE I HAVE OF GIRLS TODAY.
I WONDER IF IT WAS A MISTAKE.
.....I WONDER IF THAT MEANS I CAN'T VISIT HER EITHER.
SHE ASKED FOR THAT. SHE SAYS SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE ANYONE.
BUT THERE'S A "VISITORS NOT AL-LOWED" SIGN...


PLEASE GO AHEAD, SENSEI.
SHALL I ASK HER? YOUR NAME IS MINORI-SENSEI, RIGHT?
YES.
SAKAKI-SAN!
Knock knock
pace
pace
HEY, SAKAKI-KUN!
I'M TRULY HAPPY THAT YOU'RE RECOVERING WELL.
I HAD A BOOK THAT SEEMED LIKE IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING, SO I BROUGHT IT FOR YOU. BUT THAT WAS A BIT FORWARD OF ME.


IT'S FINE. YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BETTER.
.....I'M SORRY, SENSEI, FOR BEING SUCH A NUISANCE AND ENDING UP LIKE THIS AGAIN.
WHAT LOVELY FLOWERS. I WONDER IF THEY'RE FROM HIGA-SAN.
I WANT YOU TO TELL SAHOKO-CHAN NOT TO COME HERE ANY-MORE. --
SENSEI, COULD I CAUSE MORE TROUBLE FOR YOU AND ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING?
HUH?

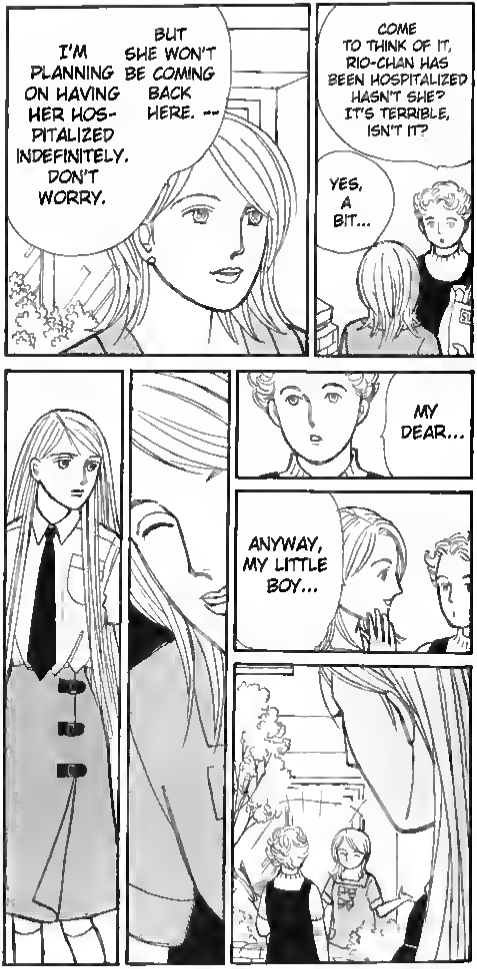
AT THAT TIME, I THOUGHT ABOUT TAKING SAHOKO-CHAN WITH ME.
SENSEI.
AND THAT NOTHING GOOD CAN COME FROM ASSOCIATING WITH ME.
HEY, SAKAKI-KUN, THAT'S --
I DON'T KNOW OF ANY OTHER WAY.....
BUT WHY --
I LOOKED FOR HER FOR A LONG TIME, BECAUSE I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM HER.
I FEEL LIKE EVEN BEFORE THEN, PROBABLY SINCE THE FIRST TIME WE MET, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT WE WOULD DIE TOGETHER.

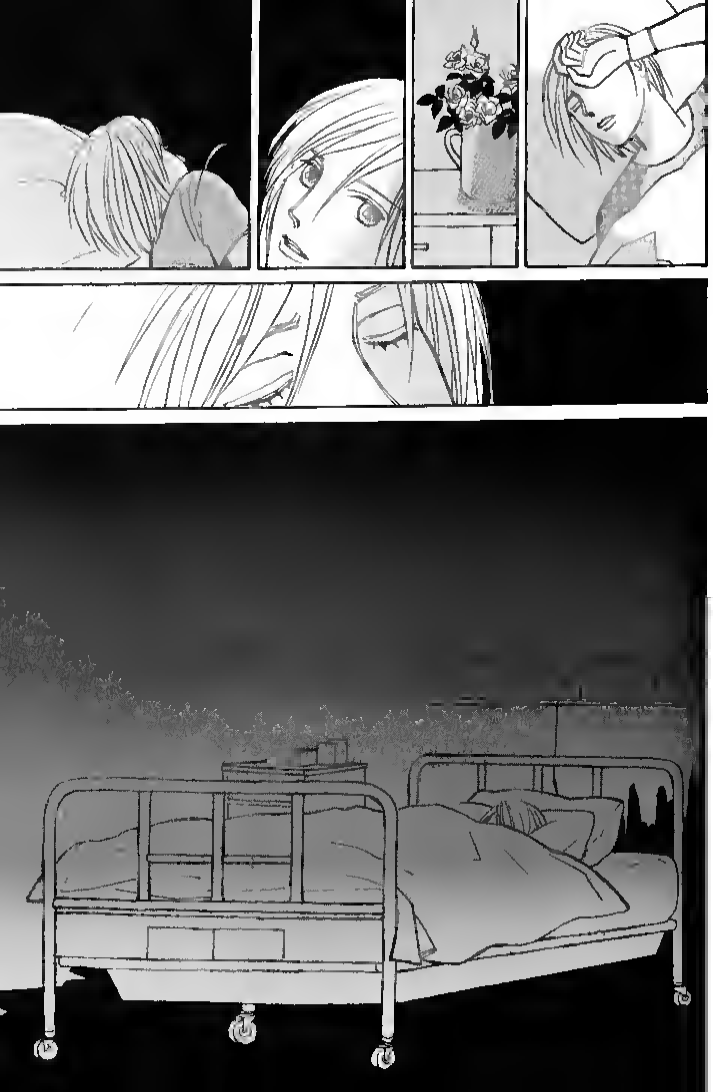
BUT I MIGHT DO IT AGAIN. --
BUT ULTIMATELY YOU DIDN'T DO IT, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
I MIGHT HAVE DONE COUNTLESS TERRIBLE THINGS DURING THE TIME I DON'T REMEMBER. MY HANDS MIGHT BE REALLY DIRTY.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND MYSELF ANYMORE. I DON'T TRUST MYSELF.
IT WAS EASY FOR YOU. AFTER ALL, SHE WAS ONLY A BABY.
"IF ONLY *SHE* WEREN'T HERE"
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE? WHY DOESN'T ANYONE TALK ABOUT YOUR LITTLE SISTER?
I DON'T KNOW.....

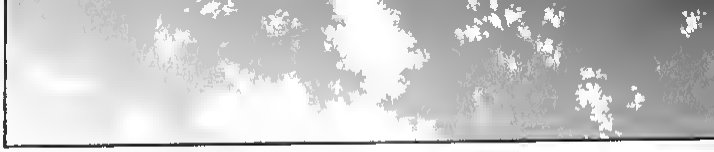
SAKAKI-SAN.
SOMETHING HAPPENED, DIDN'T IT?

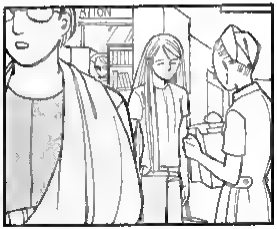
click
swish
he he he
LONG TIME NO SEE, MRS. !
OH, GOOD AFTER-NOON.
IT TURNS OUT THAT WE'LL BE MOVING BACK HERE. YOROSHIKU NE.*
I SEE... THE SAME TO YOU.

*=NOTE - RITUAL EXPRESSION THAT IN THIS CASE MEANS SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF "PLEASE BE GOOD TO ME"=


I'M PLANNING ON HAVING HER HOSPITALIZED INDEFINITELY. DON'T WORRY.
BUT SHE WON'T BE COMING BACK HERE. --
COME TO THINK OF IT, RIO-CHAN HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED HASN'T SHE? IT'S TERRIBLE, ISN'T IT?
YES, A BIT...
MY DEAR...
ANYWAY, MY LITTLE BOY...







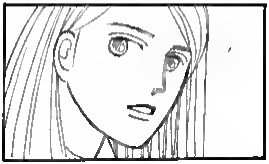
SORRY TO ALWAYS ASK YOU TO DO THIS. PLEASE GIVE THIS TO HER.

I FEEL LIKE I'M DOING IT JUST FOR MY OWN PEACE OF MIND.

.. BUT I CAN'T DO ANY-THING TO HELP HER .....

HELLO. I'M MINORI. I HEARD THAT YOU'VE BEEN COMING EVERY DAY. IT'S IMPRESSIVE.

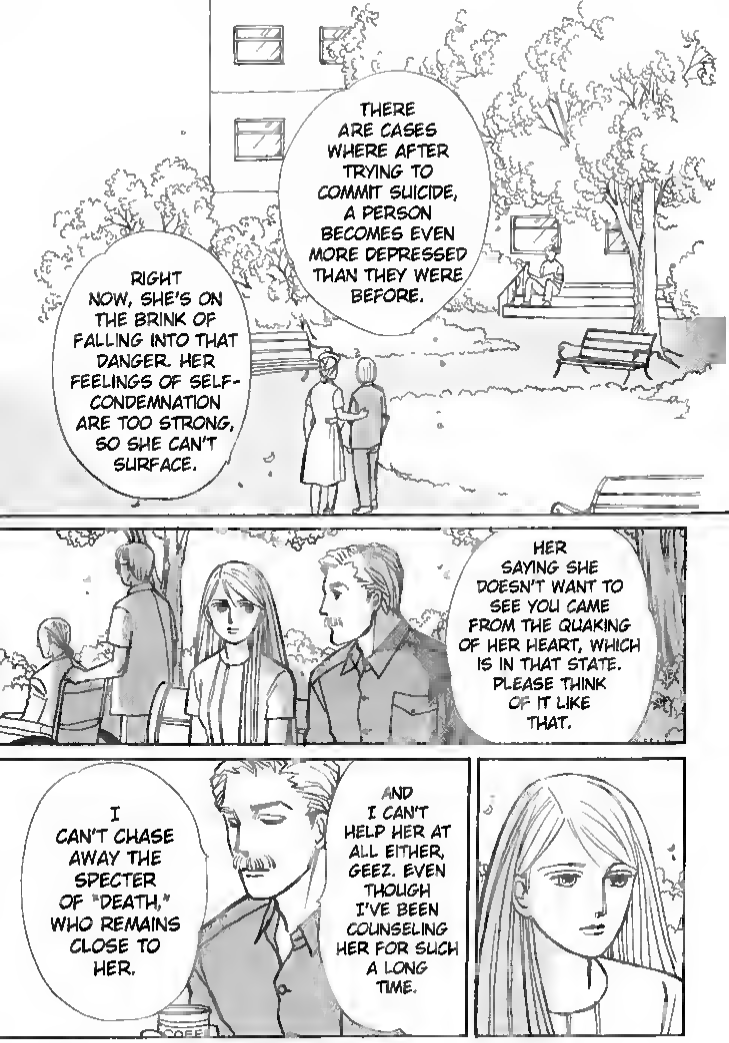
HIGA-SAN!

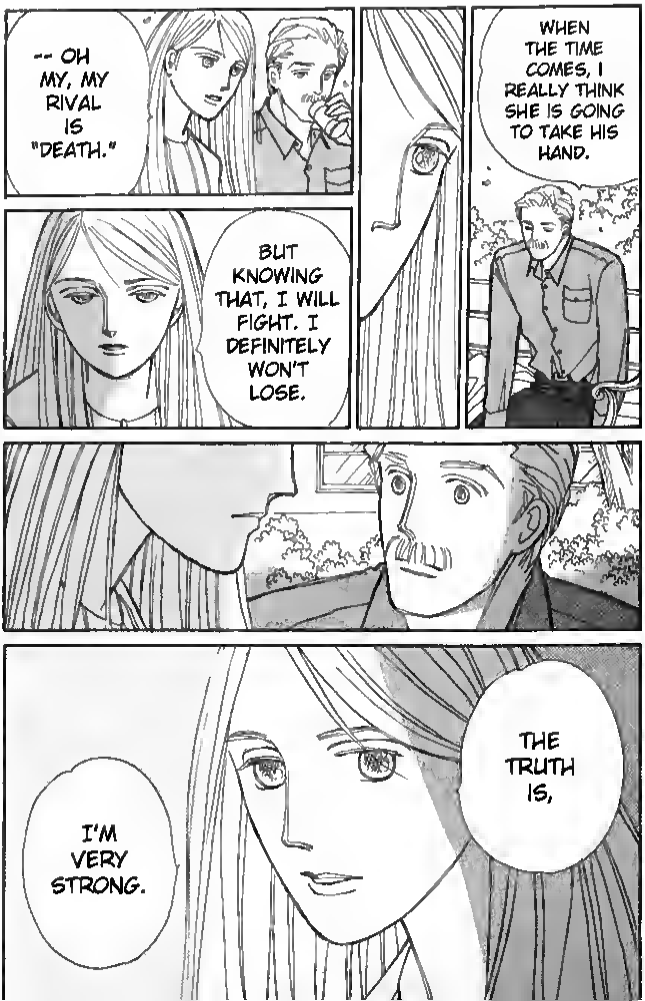


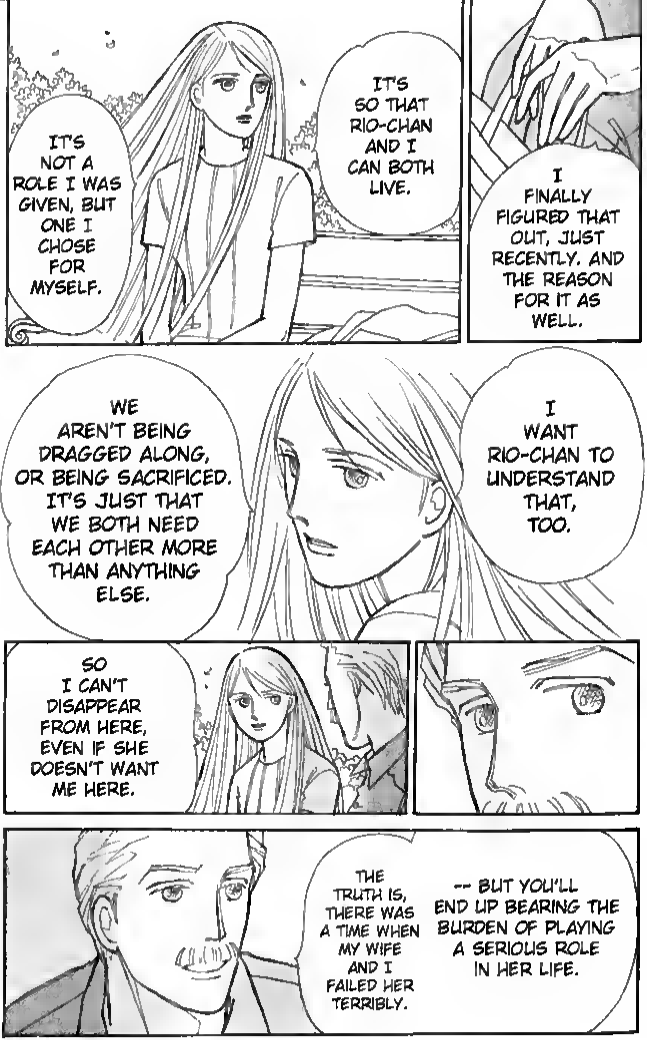
THE TRUTH IS, SAKAKI-KUN ASKED ME TO PASS ON A MESSAGE. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

HUH?

UM, I WONDER IF I MIGHT HAVE A FEW MOMENTS OF YOUR TIME RIGHT NOW.

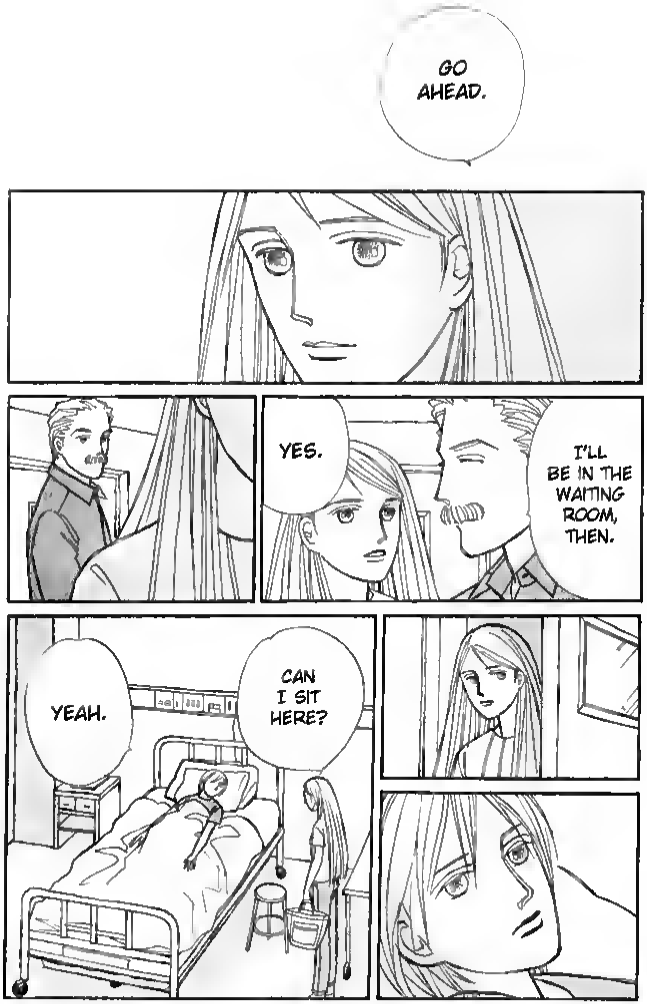

THERE ARE CASES WHERE AFTER TRYING TO COMMIT SUICIDE, A PERSON BECOMES EVEN MORE DEPRESSED THAN THEY WERE BEFORE.
RIGHT NOW, SHE'S ON THE BRINK OF FALLING INTO THAT DANGER. HER FEELINGS OF SELF-CONDEMNATION ARE TOO STRONG, SO SHE CAN'T SURFACE.
HER SAYING SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU CAME FROM THE QUAKING OF HER HEART, WHICH IS IN THAT STATE. PLEASE THINK OF IT LIKE THAT.
I CAN'T CHASE AWAY THE SPECTER OF "DEATH," WHO REMAINS CLOSE TO HER.
AND I CAN'T HELP HER AT ALL EITHER, GEEZ. EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN COUNSELING HER FOR SUCH A LONG TIME.

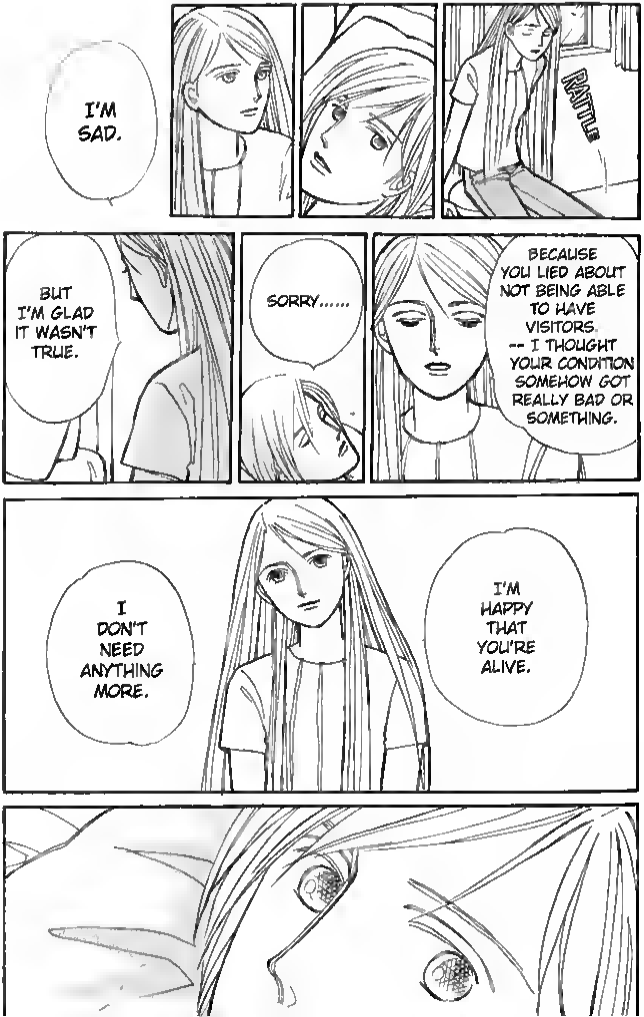

-- OH MY, MY RIVAL IS "DEATH."
WHEN THE TIME COMES, I REALLY THINK SHE IS GOING TO TAKE HIS HAND.
BUT KNOWING THAT, I WILL FIGHT. I DEFINITELY WON'T LOSE.
THE TRUTH IS,
I'M VERY STRONG.

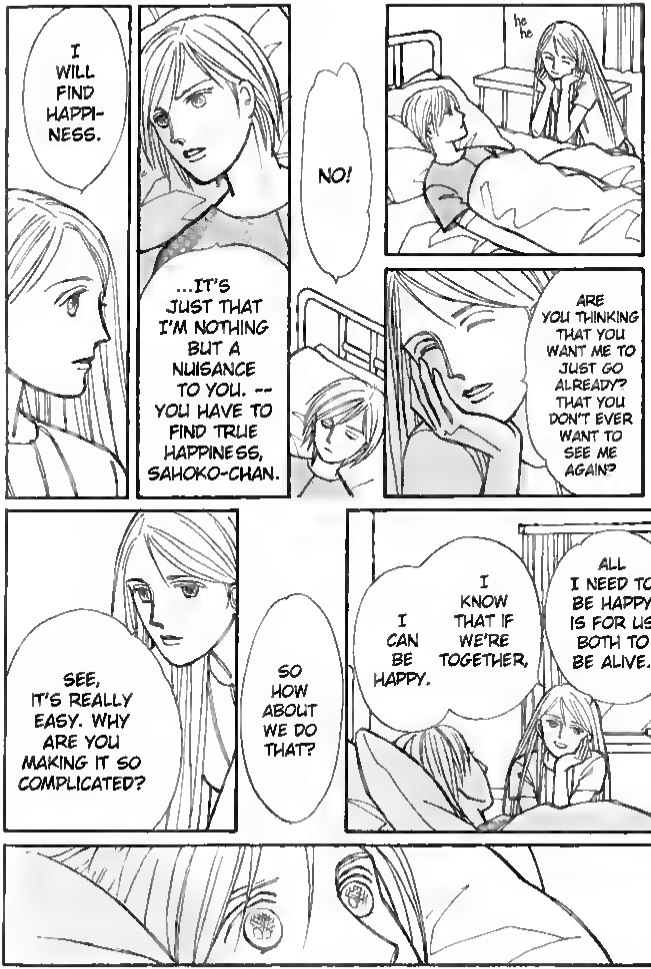

IT'S NOT A ROLE I WAS GIVEN, BUT ONE I CHOSE FOR MYSELF.
IT'S SO THAT RIO-CHAN AND I CAN BOTH LIVE.
I FINALLY FIGURED THAT OUT, JUST RECENTLY. AND THE REASON FOR IT AS WELL.
WE AREN'T BEING DRAGGED ALONG, OR BEING SACRIFICED. IT'S JUST THAT WE BOTH NEED EACH OTHER MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
I WANT RIO-CHAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT, TOO.
SO I CAN'T DISAPPEAR FROM HERE, EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T WANT ME HERE.
THE TRUTH IS, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MY WIFE AND I FAILED HER TERRIBLY.
-- BUT YOU'LL END UP BEARING THE BURDEN OF PLAYING A SERIOUS ROLE IN HER LIFE.

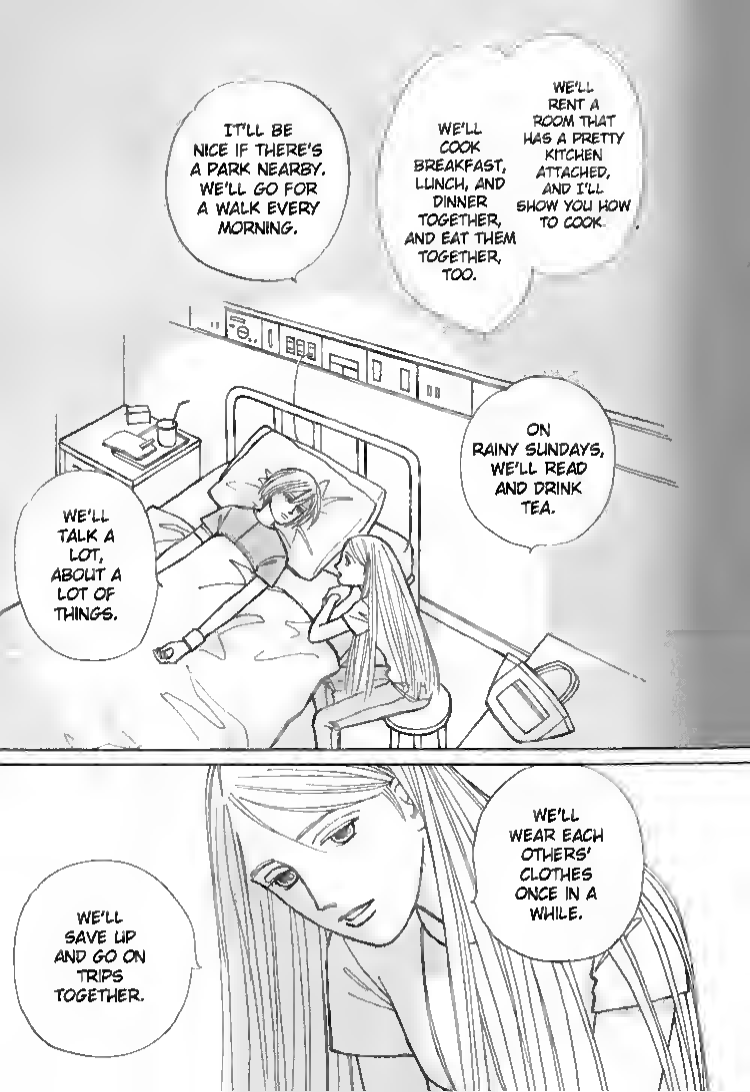
IT'S NOT THAT SHE DOESN'T TRUST YOU. BUT IF THE SAME THING WERE TO HAPPEN AGAIN, SHE REALLY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO RECOVER FROM IT, I DON'T THINK.
SHE WAS DRIVEN INTO A SITUATION SO CRUEL IT WAS UNIMAGINABLE.....
SHE WAS ISOLATED WITHIN HER FAMILY, AND AT A TIME WHEN SHE NEEDED US MOST, THE TWO OF US WENT ABROAD TOGETHER.
IT WAS WHEN SHE WAS STILL YOUNG JUST AS WE'D FINALLY MANAGED TO EARN HER TRUST, WE DID SOMETHING THAT BETRAYED IT HORRIBLY.
YOU MAY COME TO REGRET IT SOMEDAY.
YOU MIGHT BE TRYING TO INFLUENCE THE EVENTUAL COURSE OF YOUR LIFE TOO MUCH, TOO. YOU'RE RATHER YOUNG TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DECISION, AND YOU'LL BE LOSING MANY THINGS.
IT WAS PROBABLY MADE A LONG TIME AGO.
THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE.
FROM NOW ON, IT'S ONLY A QUESTION OF WHETHER THINGS WILL PROGRESS.
SO PLEASE DON'T WORRY.

SHALL WE GO?
.....
I CARRIED OUT MY TASK, SAKAKI-KUN.
.....
I'M SORRY.
WILL YOU LET HER? IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, I'LL TELL HER NO.
BUT HIGA-SAN WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU.


GO AHEAD.
YES.
I'LL BE IN THE WAITING ROOM, THEN.
CAN I SIT HERE?
YEAH.


I'M SAD.
RATTLE
BUT I'M GLAD IT WASN'T TRUE.
SORRY.....
BECAUSE YOU LIED ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO HAVE VISITORS. -- I THOUGHT YOUR CONDITION SOMEHOW GOT REALLY BAD OR SOMETHING.
I DON'T NEED ANYTHING MORE.
I'M HAPPY THAT YOU'RE ALIVE.


I WILL FIND HAPPI-NESS.
...IT'S JUST THAT I'M NOTHING BUT A NUISANCE TO YOU. -- YOU HAVE TO FIND TRUE HAPPINESS, SAHOKO-CHAN.
NO!
he he
ARE YOU THINKING THAT YOU WANT ME TO JUST GO ALREADY? THAT YOU DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN?
SEE, IT'S REALLY EASY. WHY ARE YOU MAKING IT SO COMPLICATED?
SO HOW ABOUT WE DO THAT?
I CAN BE HAPPY.
I KNOW THAT IF WE'RE TOGETHER,
ALL I NEED TO BE HAPPY IS FOR US BOTH TO BE ALIVE.

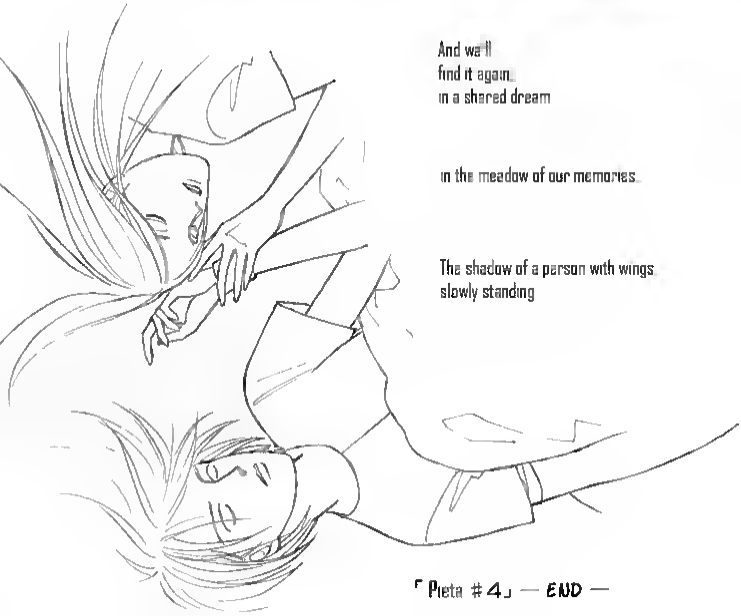

IT'LL BE NICE IF THERE'S A PARK NEARBY. WE'LL GO FOR A WALK EVERY MORNING.
WE'LL COOK BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND DINNER TOGETHER, AND EAT THEM TOGETHER, TOO.
WE'LL RENT A ROOM THAT HAS A PRETTY KITCHEN ATTACHED, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO COOK.
ON RAINY SUNDAYS, WE'LL READ AND DRINK TEA.
WE'LL TALK A LOT, ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS.
WE'LL WEAR EACH OTHERS' CLOTHES ONCE IN A WHILE.
WE'LL SAVE UP AND GO ON TRIPS TOGETHER.

AS LONG AS WE'RE ALIVE AND TOGETHER, WE CAN DO ANYTHING.
RIGHT?

YEAH.....
CAN I STAY HERE?
I'M GLAD.
SAKAKI-KUN, HIGA-SAN.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN? I'M COMING IN.
KNOCK KNOCK
ぴこ
.....
.....

sil
ence
.....HEY..... COULD IT BE THAT... SHE TRIED IT AGAIN...?
.....
PHEW
z z z z z z z z z z z z

DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT--! IT'S BAD FOR MY HEART.
OH, SENSEI.


And we'll find it again in a shared dream
in the meadow of our memories
The shadow of a person with wings slowly standing

「Pieta #4」— END —

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pieta
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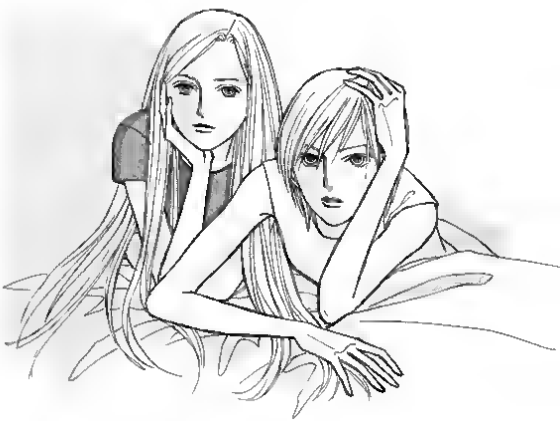
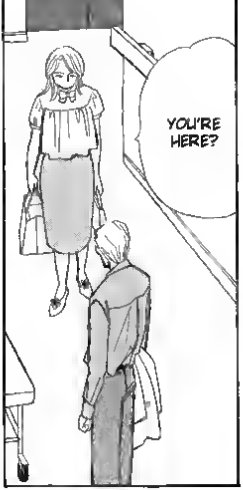
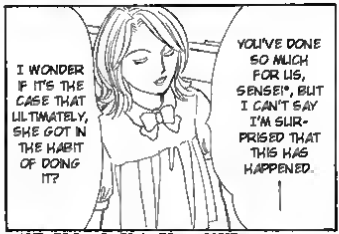
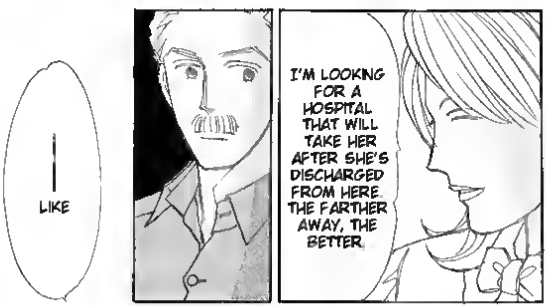
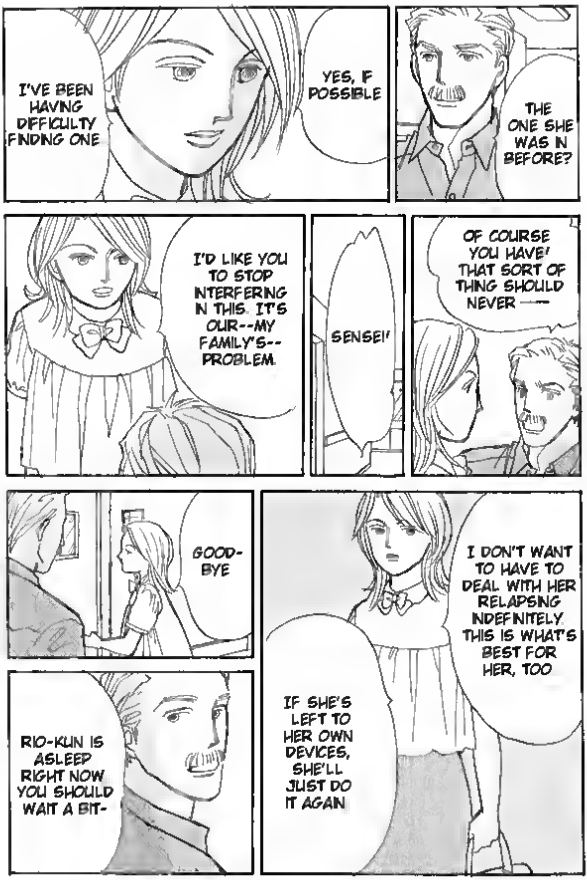


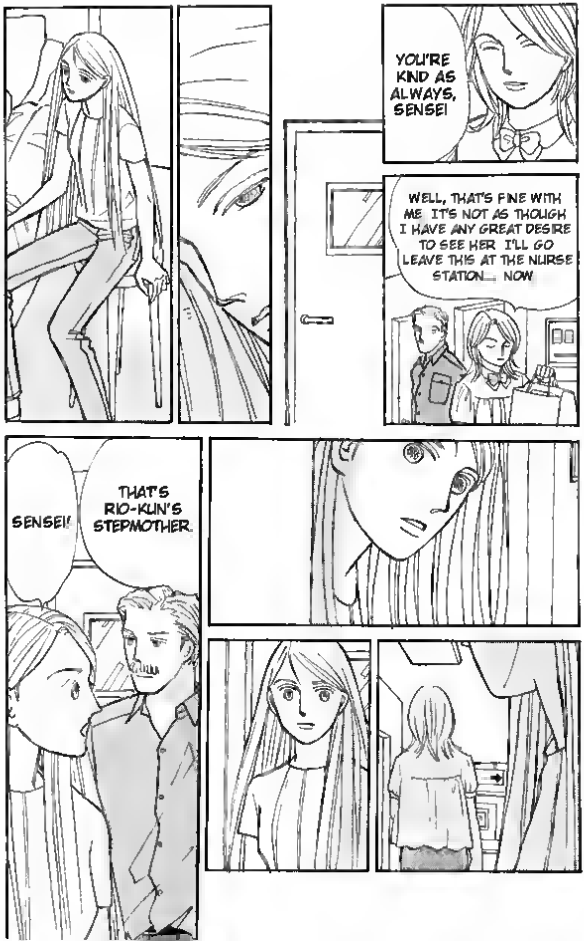


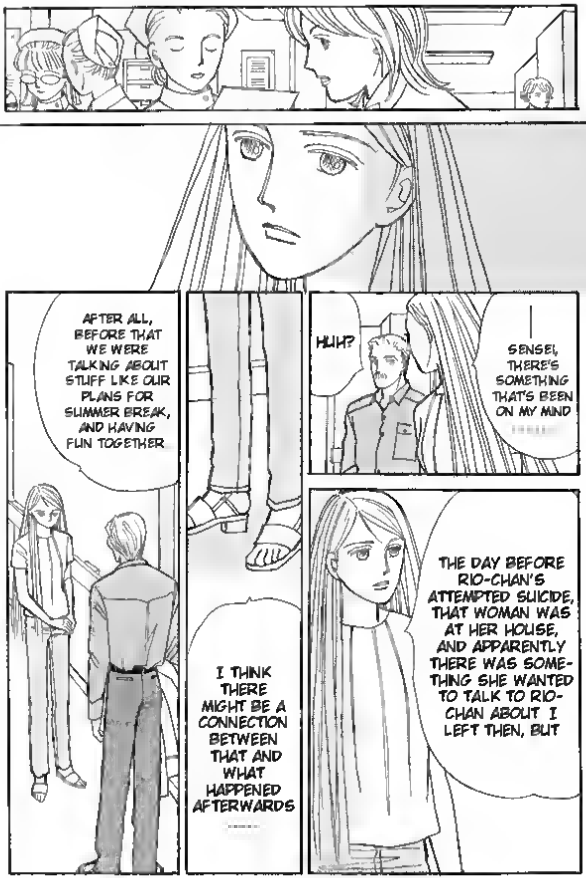

YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR US, SENSEI*, BUT I CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED THAT THIS HAS HAPPENED.
I WONDER IF IT'S THE CASE THAT ULTIMATELY, SHE GOT IN THE HABIT OF DOING IT?

NOTE: TITLE USED TO ADDRESS DOCTORS

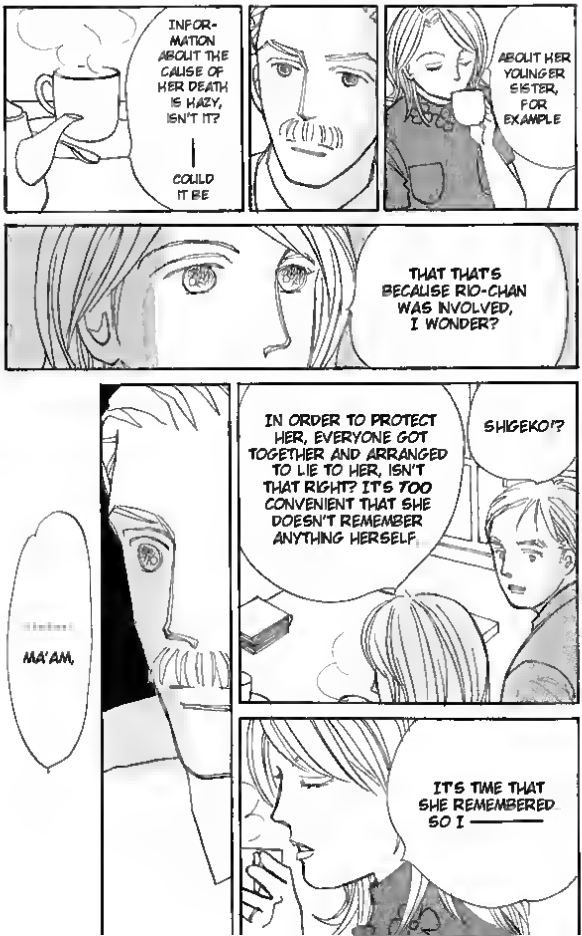


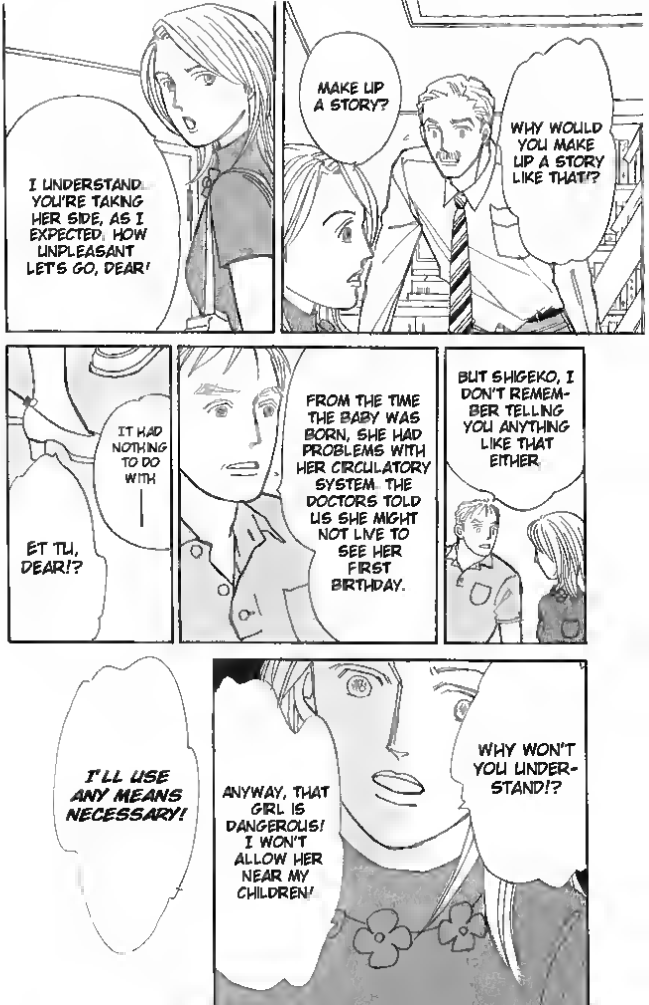

I'VE BEEN HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING ONE
YES, IF POSSIBLE
THE ONE SHE WAS IN BEFORE?
I'D LIKE YOU TO STOP INTERFERING IN THIS. IT'S OUR--MY FAMILY'S-- PROBLEM.
SENSEI!
OF COURSE YOU HAVE! THAT SORT OF THING SHOULD NEVER ——
GOOD-BYE
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH HER RELAPSING INDEFINITELY THIS IS WHAT'S BEST FOR HER, TOO
IF SHE'S LEFT TO HER OWN DEVICES, SHE'LL JUST DO IT AGAN
RIO-KUN IS ASLEEP RIGHT NOW YOU SHOULD WAIT A BIT-

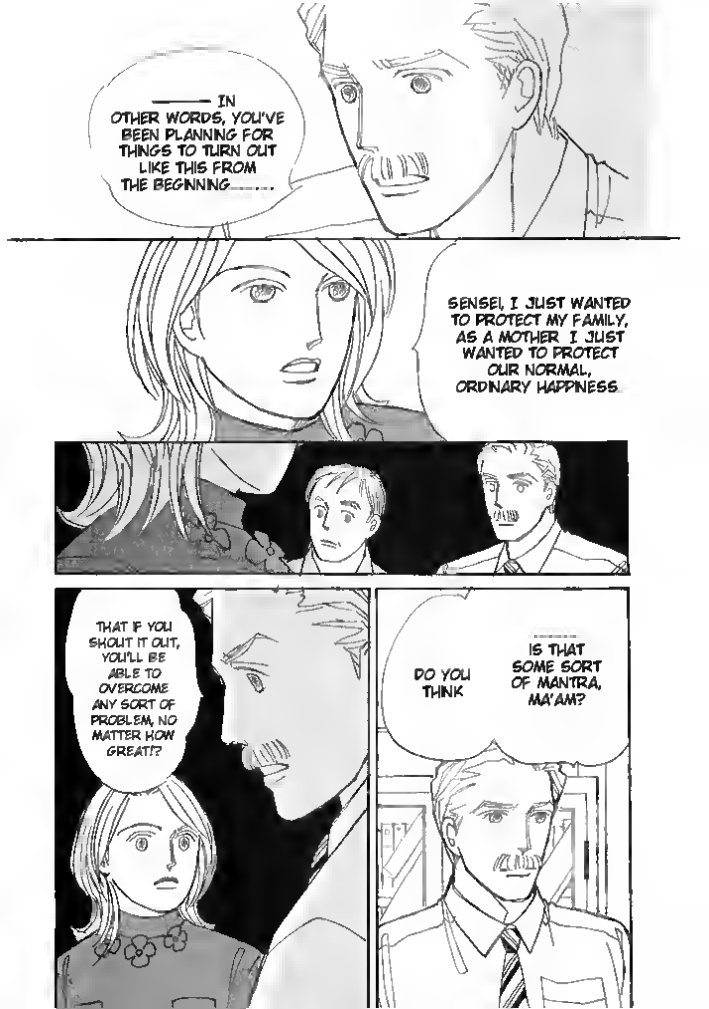

YOU'RE KIND AS ALWAYS, SENSEI
WELL, THAT'S FINE WITH ME. IT'S NOT AS THOUGH I HAVE ANY GREAT DESIRE TO SEE HER. I'LL GO LEAVE THIS AT THE NURSE STATION... NOW.
SENSEI!
THAT'S RIO-KUN'S STEPMOTHER.

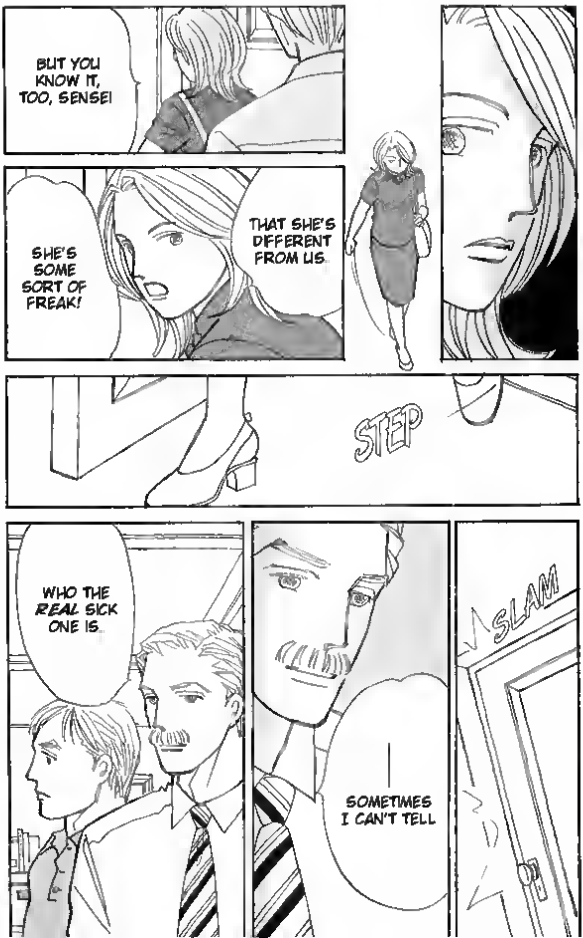

SENSEI, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN ON MY MIND
HUH?
AFTER ALL, BEFORE THAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT STUFF LIKE OUR PLANS FOR SUMMER BREAK, AND HAVING FUN TOGETHER
I THINK THERE MIGHT BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS
THE DAY BEFORE RIO-CHAN'S ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, THAT WOMAN WAS AT HER HOUSE, AND APPARENTLY THERE WAS SOMETHING SHE WANTED TO TALK TO RIO-CHAN ABOUT I LEFT THEN, BUT

I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE FOR YOU TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.
WHAT WAS IT THAT HAPPENED?
I FEEL LIKE WE'RE BEING INTERROGATED.
I WONDER IF YOU'VE ALREADY DECIDED THAT I'M TO BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL. PLEASE EXCUSE ME.
I JUST WANT TO KNOW, AS SOMEONE WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN OBSERVING HER HEART AND MIND.
—— I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.
IT WAS NOTHING, REALLY. ——
I JUST TOLD HER THINGS I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT.


INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAUSE OF HER DEATH IS HAZY, ISN'T IT?
COULD IT BE
ABOUT HER YOUNGER SISTER, FOR EXAMPLE
THAT THAT'S BECAUSE RIO-CHAN WAS INVOLVED, I WONDER?
IN ORDER TO PROTECT HER, EVERYONE GOT TOGETHER AND ARRANGED TO LIE TO HER, ISN'T THAT RIGHT? IT'S TOO CONVENIENT THAT SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING HERSELF.
SHIGEKO!?
MA'AM,
IT'S TIME THAT SHE REMEMBERED SO I ——


I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE TAKING HER SIDE, AS I EXPECTED. HOW UNPLEASANT. LET'S GO, DEAR!
MAKE UP A STORY?
WHY WOULD YOU MAKE UP A STORY LIKE THAT!?
IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH —
ET TU, DEAR!?
FROM THE TIME THE BABY WAS BORN, SHE HAD PROBLEMS WITH HER CIRCULATORY SYSTEM. THE DOCTORS TOLD US SHE MIGHT NOT LIVE TO SEE HER FIRST BIRTHDAY.
BUT SHIGEKO, I DON'T REMEMBER TELLING YOU ANYTHING LIKE THAT EITHER
I'LL USE ANY MEANS NECESSARY!
ANYWAY, THAT GIRL IS DANGEROUS! I WON'T ALLOW HER NEAR MY CHILDREN!
WHY WON'T YOU UNDERSTAND!?


——— IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'VE BEEN PLANNING FOR THINGS TO TURN OUT LIKE THIS FROM THE BEGINNING———...
SENSEI, I JUST WANTED TO PROTECT MY FAMILY, AS A MOTHER I JUST WANTED TO PROTECT OUR NORMAL, ORDINARY HAPPINESS.
THAT IF YOU SHOUT IT OUT, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME ANY SORT OF PROBLEM, NO MATTER HOW GREAT!?
DO YOU THINK
IS THAT SOME SORT OF MANTRA, MA'AM?


BUT YOU KNOW IT, TOO, SENSEI
THAT SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM US
SHE'S SOME SORT OF FREAK!
STEP
WHO THE REAL SICK ONE IS
SOMETIMES I CAN'T TELL
SLAM

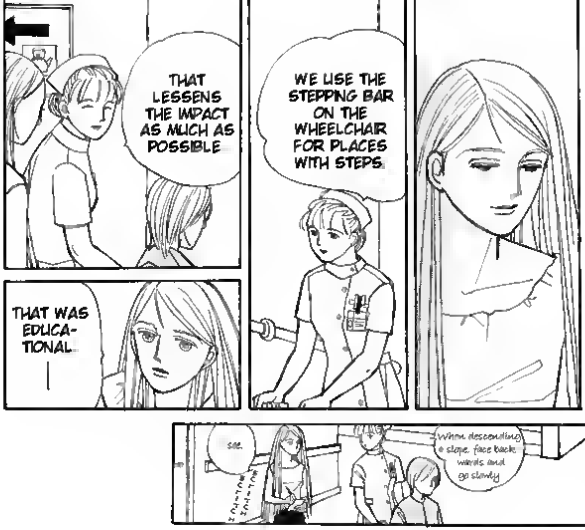
SAKAKI-SAN!
PLEASE EXPLAN TO RIO-KUN ABOUT WHAT YOU TOLD US BEFORE, ABOUT THE BABY.
THERE IS STILL A LARGE NEST OF UNCERTAINTY IN HER HEART.
PLEASE TAKE AWAY EVEN A SMALL PORTION OF THAT FOR HER.
AS HER FATHER

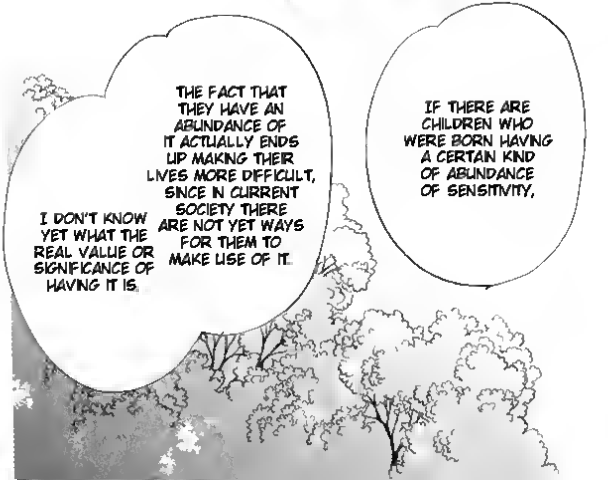
I HAD BEEN THINKING SHE WAS QUITE AN ECCENTRIC PERSON, BUT I NEVER IMAGINED SHE WOULD GO THAT FAR.
THAT'S A TERRIBLE CRIME!
I WAS SURPRISED!
BUT
RIGHT NOW, ANYWAY, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO WAIT FOR RIO-CHAN TO RECOVER, ISN'T IT?
WITH THINGS LIKE THIS, RIO-CHAN REALLY IS GOING TO BE KILLED. THERE'S NO DELAYING IT. LET'S MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO DISCUSS IT. WE'LL MAKE HER OUR DAUGHTER, BY HOOK OR BY CROOK!
SHIGEKO-SAN JUST ABHORS RIO-CHAN BECAUSE OF HER EGO AS A MOTHER WHICH MAKES HER CHERISH HER CHILD ABOVE ALL OTHERS
IF HER TIES WITH THAT FAMILY ARE CUT, EVEN JUST FORMALLY, BOTH RIO-CHAN AND THE TWO OF US WILL BE ABLE TO RELAX AND CONCENTRATE ON HER TREATMENT, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
WELL, CALM DOWN

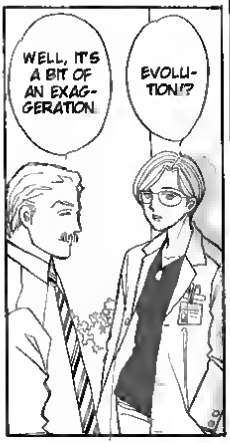
HUH?
I WAS THINKING THAT TOO, BUT
IT SEEMS THERE'S MORE THAN THAT
SHE CAME TO MY OFFICE ALONE
I SOMETIMES REMEMBER THE TIME I FIRST MET RIO-CHAN, FOR COUNSELING
I WAS SURPRISED BECAUSE I NATURALLY EXPECTED HER TO BE WITH A PARENT
LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW, I SAW A GRADE-SCHOOL GIRL WALKING AMID-ST A GROUP OF COLLEGE STUDENTS. SHE REALLY STOOD OUT
BUT WHILE I WAS LOOKING AT HER, I BEGAN TO THINK
THAT IT WASN'T SIMPLY HER SMALL SIZE THAT MADE HER SO CON-SPICUOUS

THERE WAS SOME SPECIAL FEELING ABOUT HER THAT MADE THE STUDENTS AROUND HER LOOK HAZY.
IF I WERE TO TRY TO DESCRIBE IT, IT WOULD BE LIKE A LITTLE SILVER UNICORN MIXED IN WITH A HERD OF CHESTNUTS.
THAT IMPRESSION OF HER HASN'T CHANGED.
THE TRUTH IS, I FELT THE SAME WAY WHEN I SAW HIGA-KUN. THOUGH THEY LOOK NOTHING ALIKE,
I FEEL THERE'S A CLEAR COMMONALITY BETWEEN THEM
I REMEMBER THAT THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER, IN THE EXAMINING ROOM, I COULDN'T LOOK AWAY I MYSELF THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE.
HOW ABOUT YOU?
YES

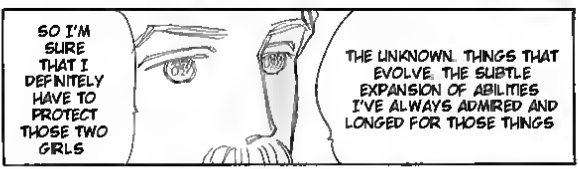
TO SHIGEKO-SAN, IT MUST BE AN "UNFAMILIAR THING" THAT SHOULD BE HATED.
YOU MENTIONED IT, TOO. HIGA-KUN'S "DIFFERENT SENSITIVITY."
AND FOR US, IT'S SOMETHING THAT OUR HEARTS ARE DRAWN TO.
IT'S DIFFERENT SCENERY THAN WHAT I CAN SEE FROM THE WINDOW OF MY HOSPITAL ROOM.
I'M HAPPY


THAT LESSENS THE IMPACT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
WE USE THE STEPPING BAR ON THE WHEELCHAIR FOR PLACES WITH STEPS.
THAT WAS EDUCA-TIONAL.
SEE.
(WITH DISCOMFITING A CLOSE FACE BACK WARDS AND UP SLOWLY)


IF THERE ARE CHILDREN WHO WERE BORN HAVING A CERTAIN KIND OF ABUNDANCE OF SENSITIVITY,
THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF IT ACTUALLY ENDS UP MAKING THEIR LIVES MORE DIFFICULT, SINCE IN CURRENT SOCIETY THERE ARE NOT YET WAYS FOR THEM TO MAKE USE OF IT.
I DON'T KNOW YET WHAT THE REAL VALUE OR SIGNIFICANCE OF HAVING IT IS.

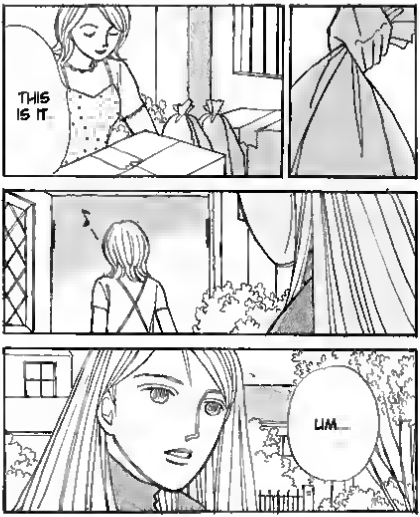

WELL, IT'S A BIT OF AN EXAGGERATION.
EVOLUTION!?

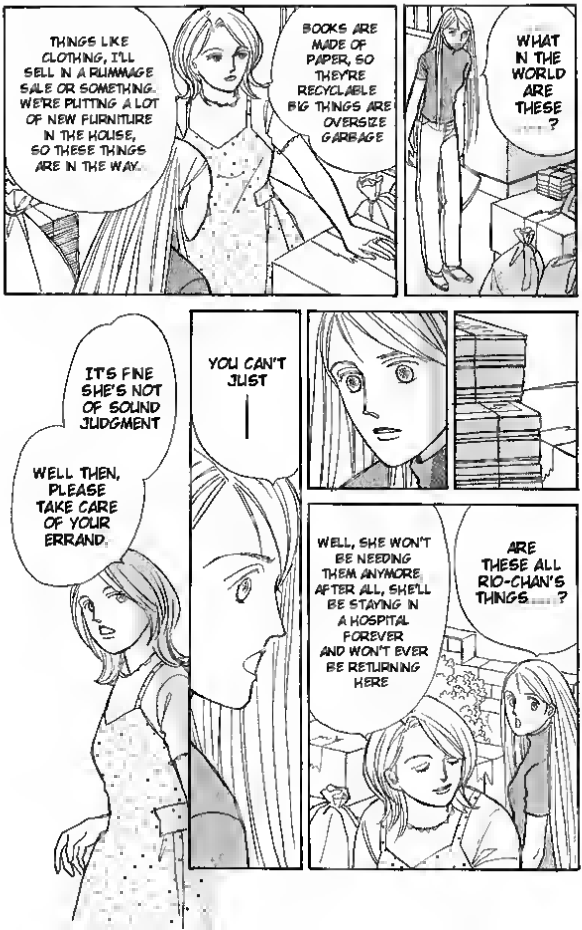
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, THEY'VE BEEN KEPT AND GRADUALLY PREPARED IN A PLACE WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF; IT TAKES A STAGGERING AMOUNT OF TIME, BUT ONE BY ONE, THEY'RE GIVEN FORM AND THEY APPEAR IN OUR WORLD.
DON'T YOU THINK THAT MAYBE THOSE CHILDREN ARE A STEP UP FROM US ON A MODEST EVOLUTIONARY LADDER?

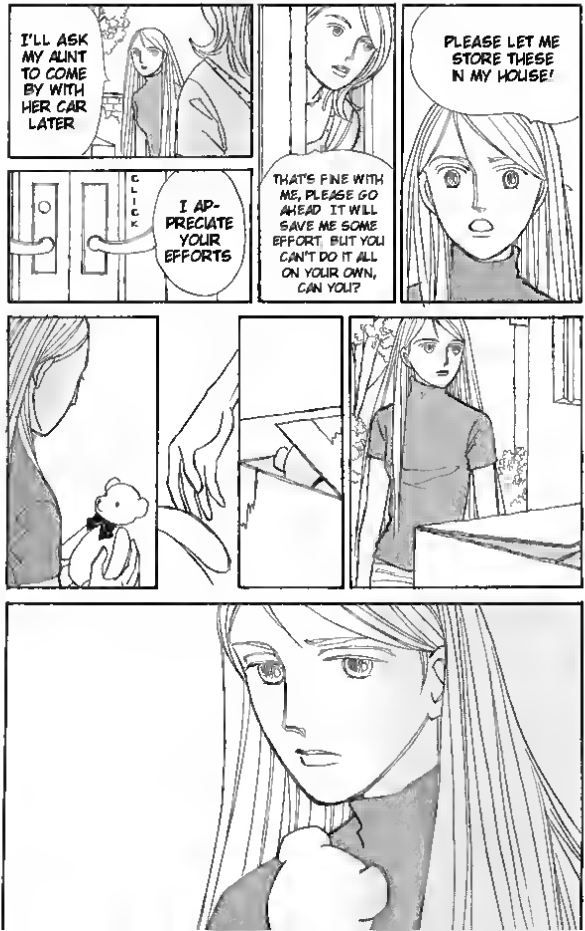

SO I'M SURE THAT I DEFINITELY HAVE TO PROTECT THOSE TWO GIRLS
THE UNKNOWN. THINGS THAT EVOLVE. THE SUBTLE EXPANSION OF ABILITIES I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED AND LONGED FOR THOSE THINGS

——AND IN CONTRAST,

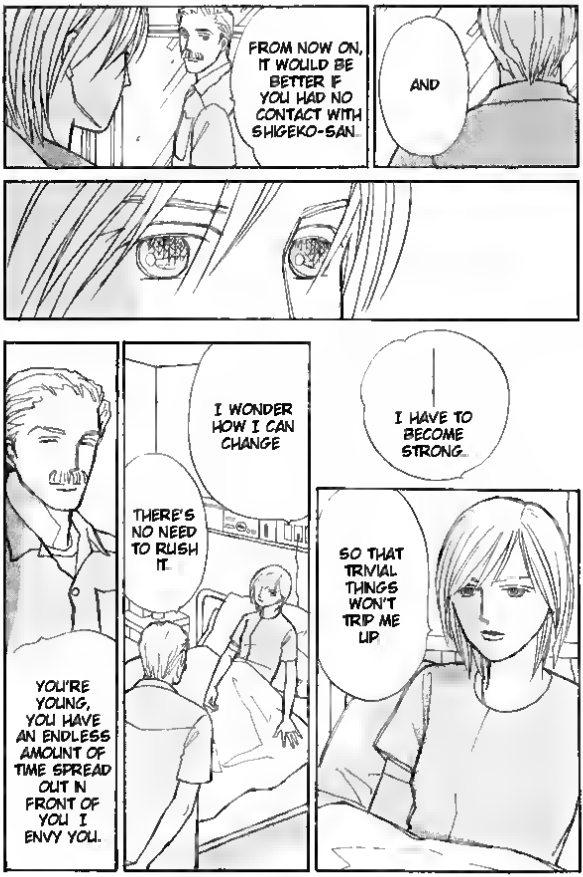
THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO WANT TO GET RID OF THEM, TOO.


THIS IS IT
UM...
OH, DID YOU NEED SOMETHING?
HUNH
RIO-CHAN ASKED ME TO BRING HER A REFERENCE BOOK —— MAY I COME IN?
WHAT A STRANGE GIRL. SHE COULD HAVE JUST ASKED ME. WELL, I DON'T CARE EITHER WAY. THE BOOKS ARE IN THAT BOX THERE PLEASE LOOK FOR THE ONE YOU NEED

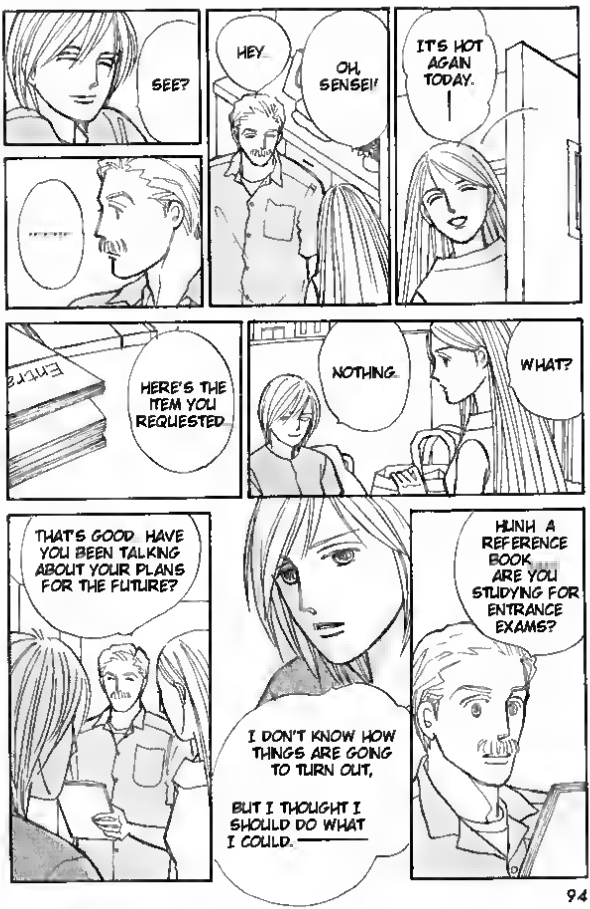

THINGS LIKE CLOTHING, I'LL SELL IN A RUMMAGE SALE OR SOMETHING. WE'RE PUTTING A LOT OF NEW FURNITURE IN THE HOUSE, SO THESE THINGS ARE IN THE WAY.
BOOKS ARE MADE OF PAPER, SO THEY'RE RECYCLABLE BIG THINGS ARE OVERSIZE GARBAGE
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE THESE ...?
ARE THESE ALL RIO-CHAN'S THINGS ...?
WELL, SHE WON'T BE NEEDING THEM ANYMORE. AFTER ALL, SHE'LL BE STAYING IN A HOSPITAL FOREVER AND WON'T EVER BE RETURNING HERE
YOU CAN'T JUST —
IT'S FINE SHE'S NOT OF SOUND JUDGMENT
WELL THEN, PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOUR ERRAND.

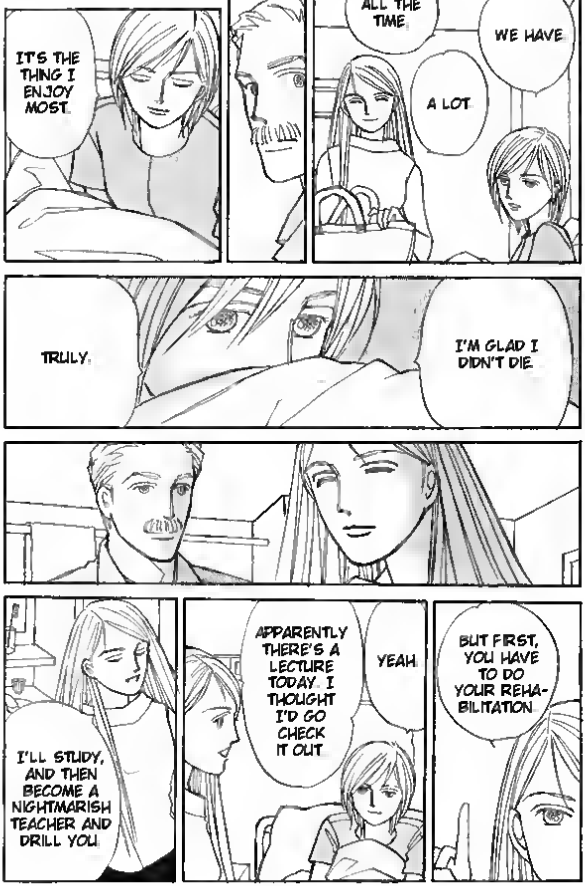

I'LL ASK MY AUNT TO COME BY WITH HER CAR LATER
PLEASE LET ME STORE THESE IN MY HOUSE!
THAT'S FINE WITH ME, PLEASE GO AHEAD IT WILL SAVE ME SOME EFFORT. BUT YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL ON YOUR OWN, CAN YOU?
CLICK
I AP-PRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS

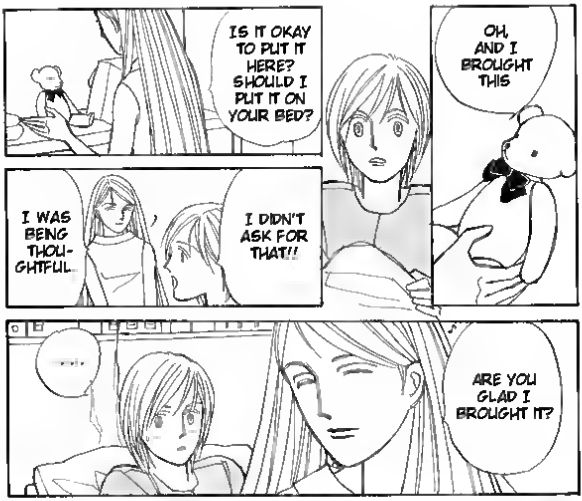
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
I REALLY WANTED YOU TO HEAR THIS FROM YOUR FATHER, BUT——
NATURALLY, YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG CONCERNING YOUR YOUNGER SISTER.
YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNEW THAT, BUT I WANTED TO CONFIRM IT.
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE MY SAYING SO, HE'S QUITE UNRELIABLE.
THANK YOU, SENSEI
YES, I UNDERSTAND.

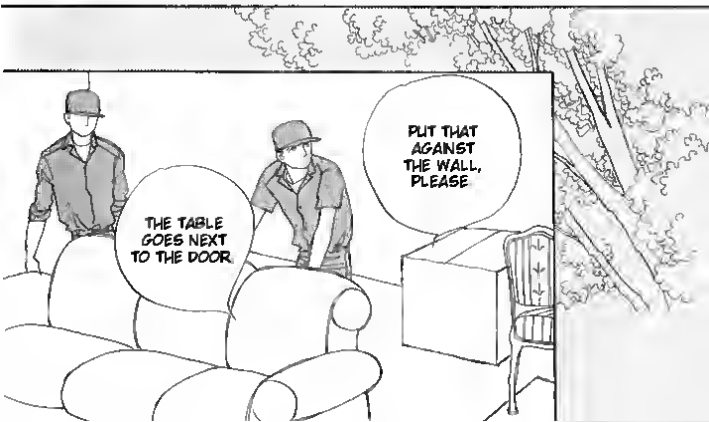

FROM NOW ON, IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU HAD NO CONTACT WITH SHIGEKO-SAN.
AND
I HAVE TO BECOME STRONG.
I WONDER HOW I CAN CHANGE
THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH IT.
SO THAT TRIVIAL THINGS WON'T TRIP ME UP.
YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU HAVE AN ENDLESS AMOUNT OF TIME SPREAD OUT IN FRONT OF YOU. I ENVY YOU.

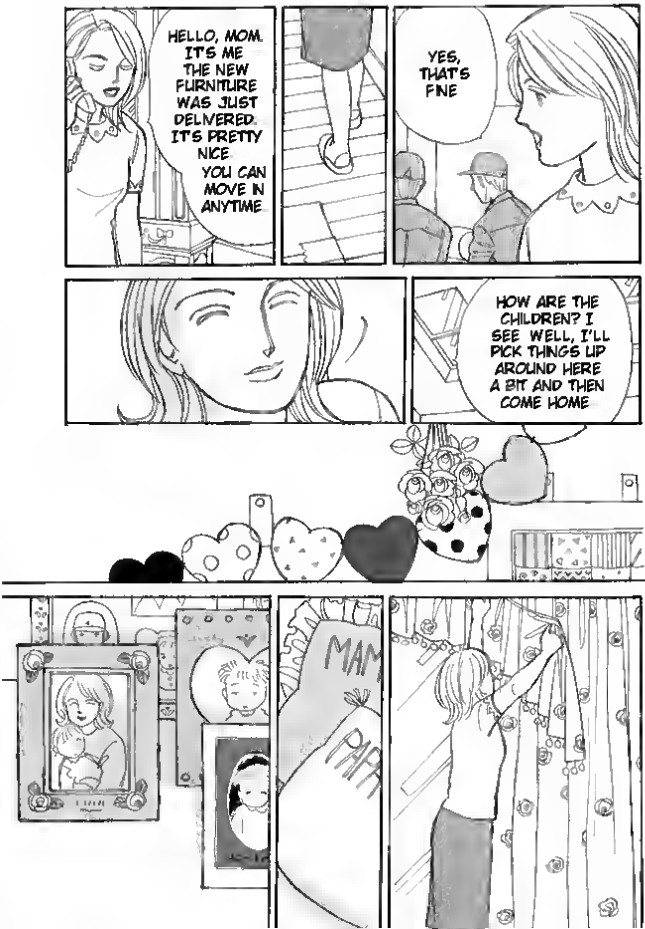
IF IT WERE POSSIBLE,
I'D WANT TO DO THINGS OVER, FROM THE BEGINNING.
OH!
HM?
SAHOKO-CHAN IS HERE
HUH?
SHE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE.
COME IN.
KNOCK KNOCK


SEE?
HEY.
OH, SENSEI!
IT'S HOT AGAIN TODAY.
HERE'S THE ITEM YOU REQUESTED
NOTHING.
WHAT?
HUNH A REFERENCE BOOK. ARE YOU STUDYING FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS?
THAT'S GOOD. HAVE YOU BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?
I DON'T KNOW HOW THINGS ARE GOING TO TURN OUT,
BUT I THOUGHT I SHOULD DO WHAT I COULD.

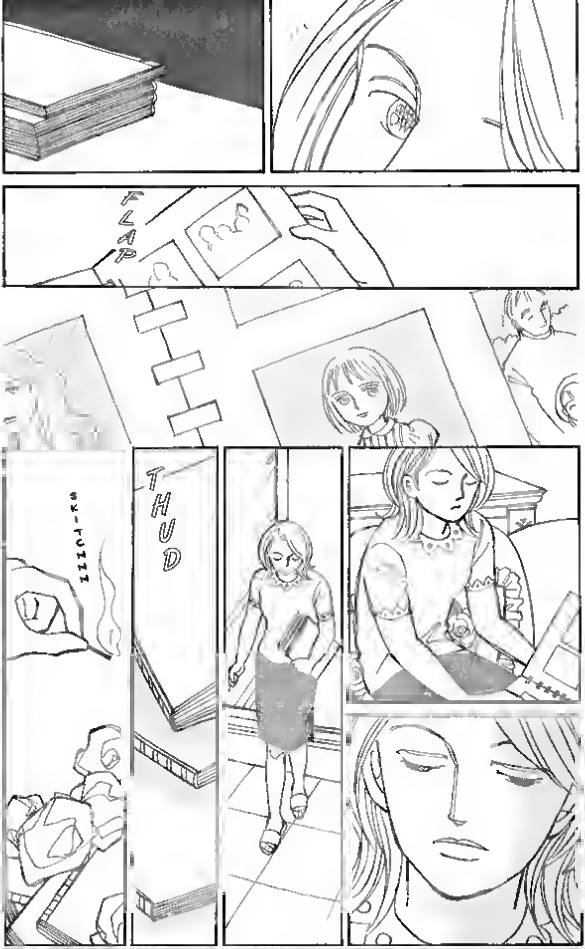

IT'S THE THING I ENJOY MOST.
ALL THE TIME.
WE HAVE
A LOT
TRULY.
I'M GLAD I DIDN'T DIE.
I'LL STUDY, AND THEN BECOME A NIGHTMARISH TEACHER AND DRILL YOU.
APPARENTLY THERE'S A LECTURE TODAY. I THOUGHT I'D GO CHECK IT OUT.
YEAH.
BUT FIRST, YOU HAVE TO DO YOUR REHA-BILITATION.

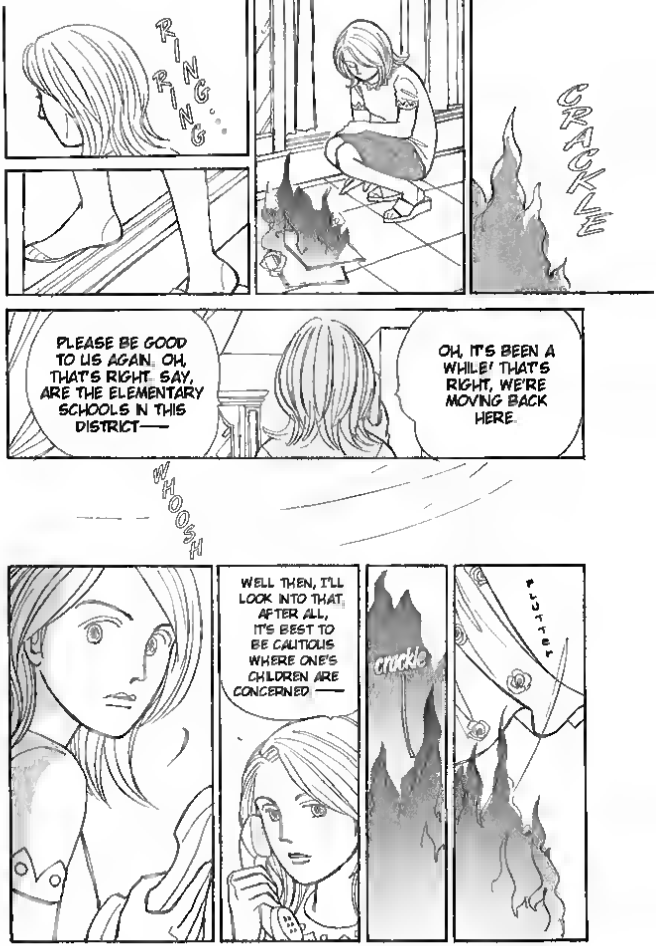

IS IT OKAY TO PUT IT HERE? SHOULD I PUT IT ON YOUR BED?
OH, AND I BROUGHT THIS
I WAS BEING THOUGHTFUL
I DIDN'T ASK FOR THAT!!
...
ARE YOU GLAD I BROUGHT IT?

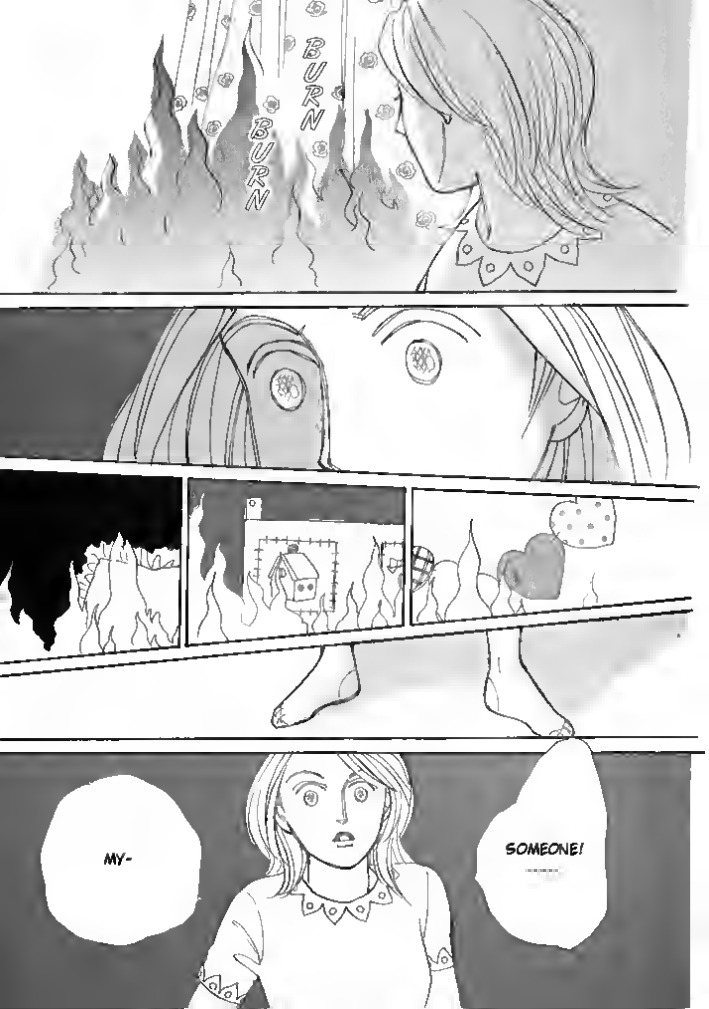

PUT THAT AGAINST THE WALL, PLEASE
THE TABLE GOES NEXT TO THE DOOR.


HELLO, MOM. IT'S ME THE NEW FURNITURE WAS JUST DELIVERED. IT'S PRETTY NICE YOU CAN MOVE IN ANYTIME
YES, THAT'S FINE
HOW ARE THE CHILDREN? I SEE WELL, I'LL PICK THINGS UP AROUND HERE A BIT AND THEN COME HOME
MAM
PAPA

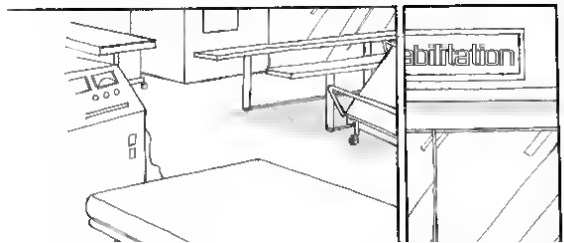
MY CASTLE!
THUD
twirl

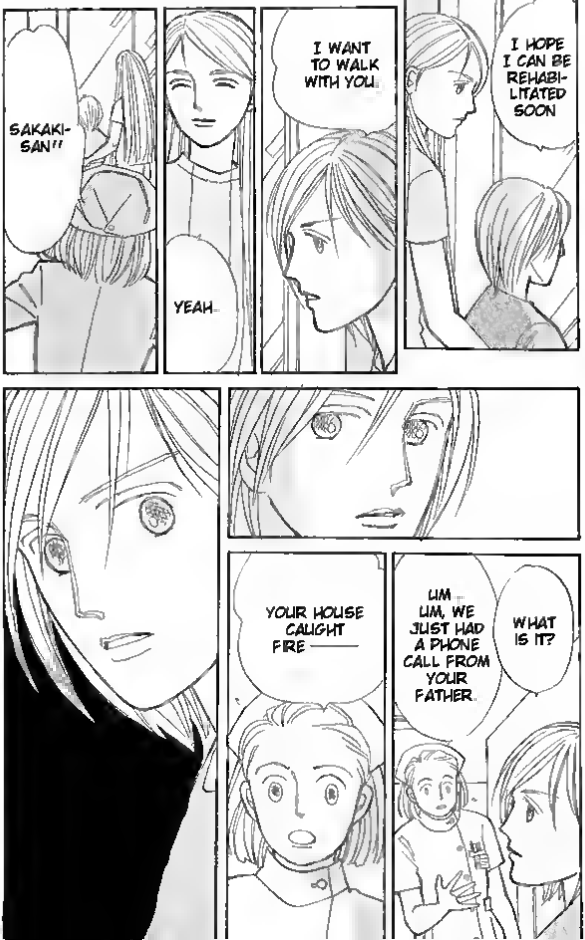

FLIP
THUD
SK-FUIII

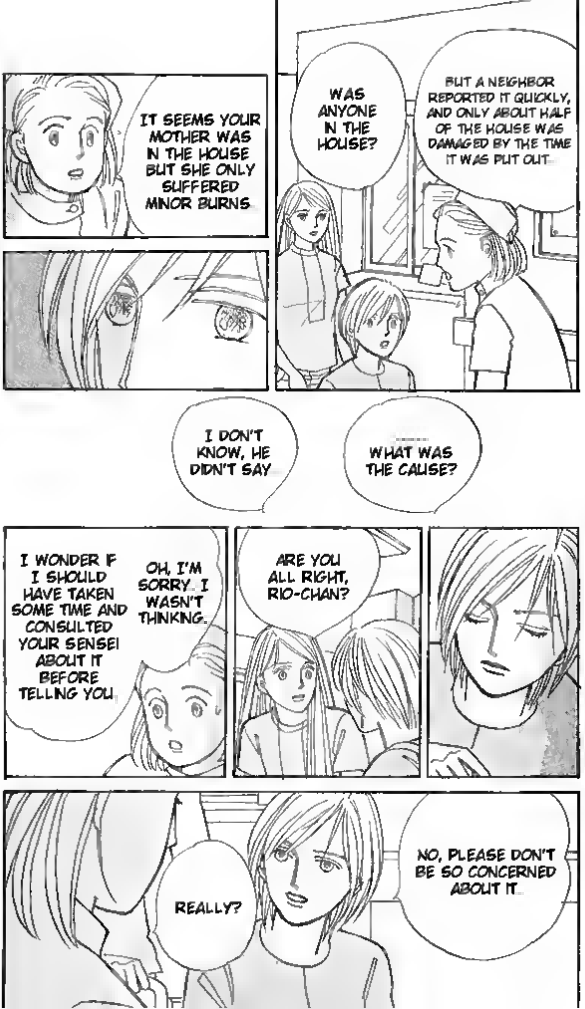

RING
RING
CRACKLE
OH, IT'S BEEN A WHILE! THAT'S RIGHT, WE'RE MOVING BACK HERE.
PLEASE BE GOOD TO US AGAIN. OH, THAT'S RIGHT. SAY, ARE THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THIS DISTRICT——
WHOOSH
WELL THEN, I'LL LOOK INTO THAT. AFTER ALL, IT'S BEST TO BE CAUTIOUS WHERE ONE'S CHILDREN ARE CONCERNED.——
crackle
FLUTTER

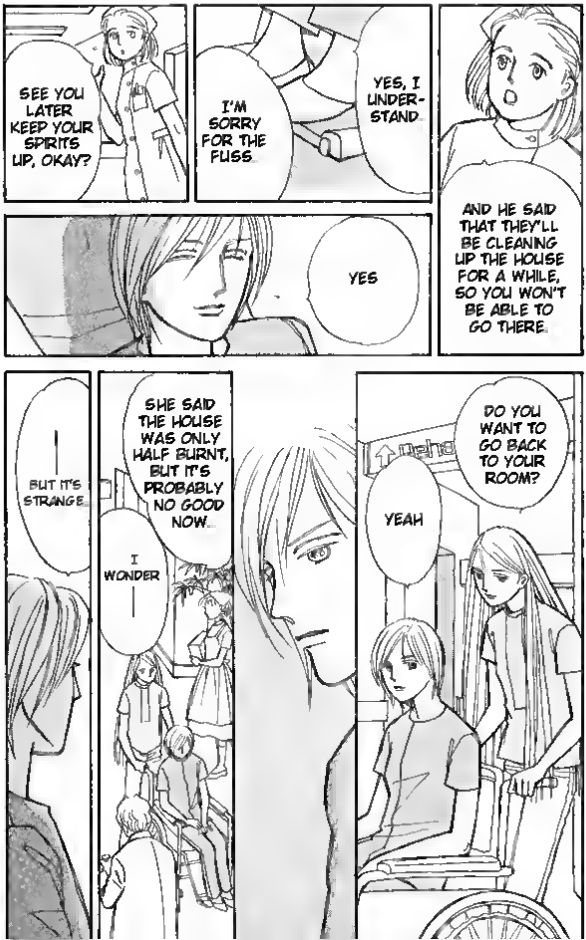

BURN
BURN
MY-
SOMEONE!

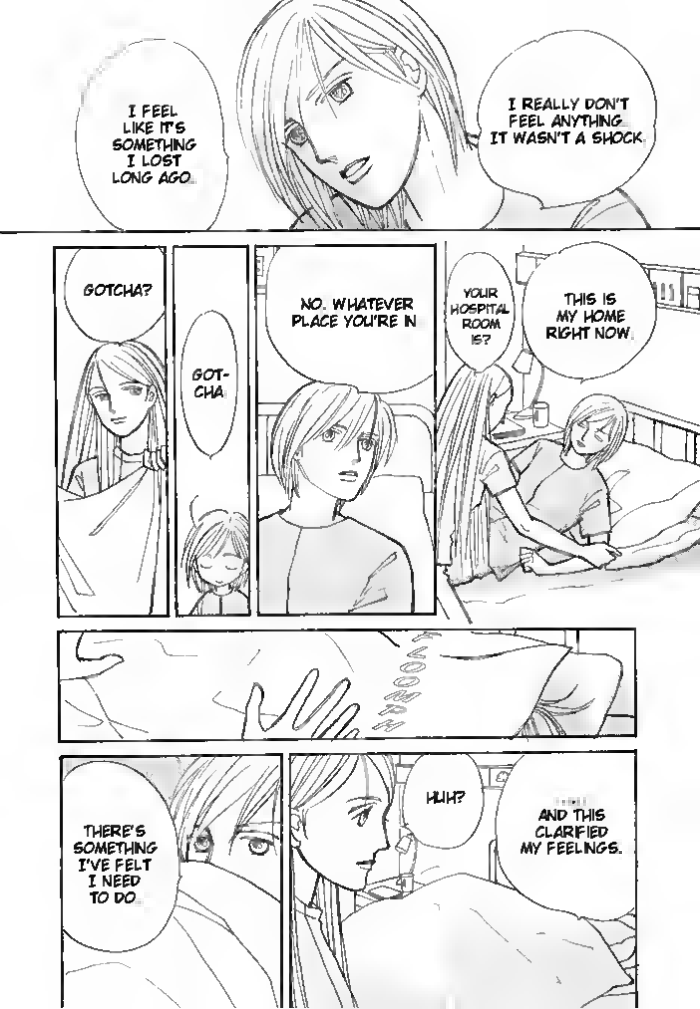
MY

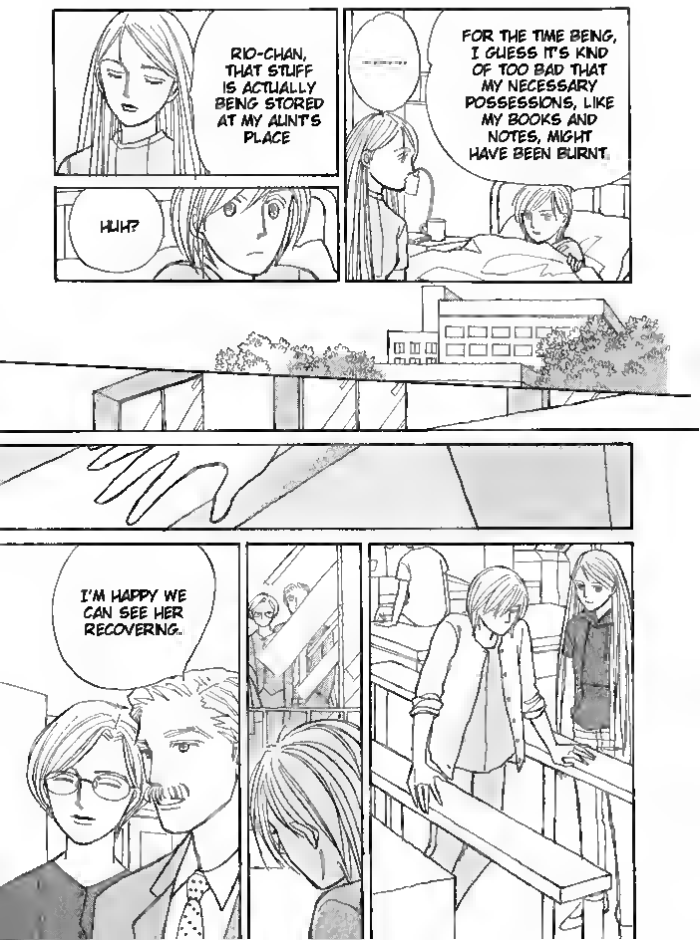

ebilitation


I HOPE I CAN BE REHABILITATED SOON
I WANT TO WALK WITH YOU.
YEAH.
SAKAKI-SAN!!
WHAT IS IT?
UM... UM, WE JUST HAD A PHONE CALL FROM YOUR FATHER.
YOUR HOUSE CAUGHT FIRE——

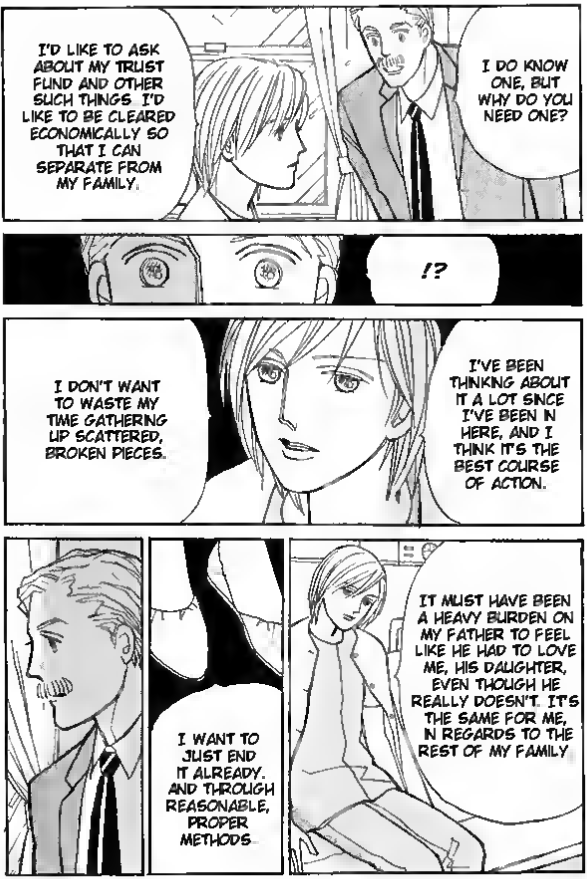

IT SEEMS YOUR MOTHER WAS IN THE HOUSE BUT SHE ONLY SUFFERED MINOR BURNS
WAS ANYONE IN THE HOUSE?
BUT A NEIGHBOR REPORTED IT QUICKLY, AND ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THE HOUSE WAS DAMAGED BY THE TIME IT WAS PUT OUT
I DON'T KNOW, HE DIDN'T SAY
WHAT WAS THE CAUSE?
I WONDER IF I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN SOME TIME AND CONSULTED YOUR SENSEI ABOUT IT BEFORE TELLING YOU
OH, I'M SORRY. I WASN'T THINKING.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, RIO-CHAN?
REALLY?
NO, PLEASE DON'T BE SO CONCERNED ABOUT IT

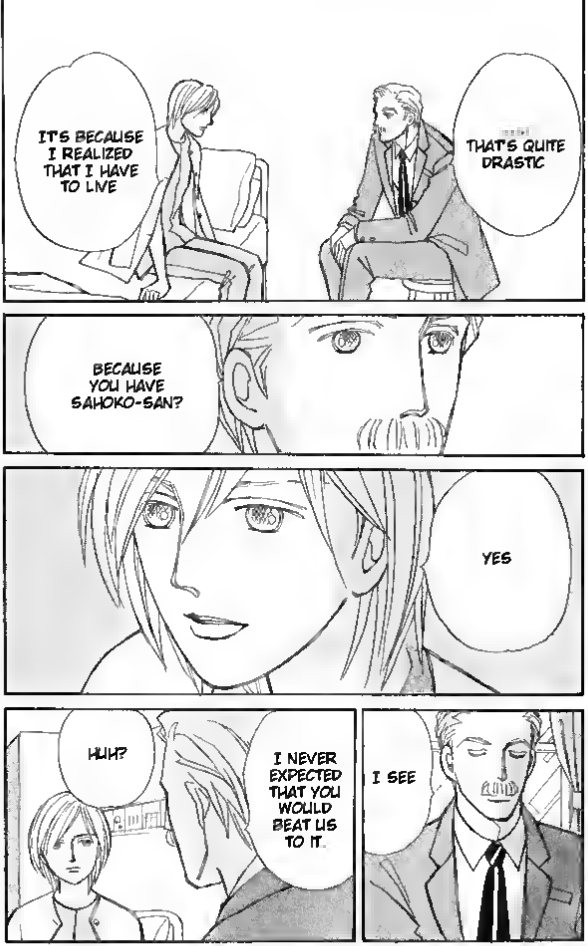

SEE YOU LATER KEEP YOUR SPIRITS UP, OKAY?
I'M SORRY FOR THE FUSS
YES, I UNDER-STAND
AND HE SAID THAT THEY'LL BE CLEANING UP THE HOUSE FOR A WHILE, SO YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO THERE
YES
DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM?
YEAH
SHE SAID THE HOUSE WAS ONLY HALF BURNT, BUT IT'S PROBABLY NO GOOD NOW
I WONDER
BUT IT'S STRANGE

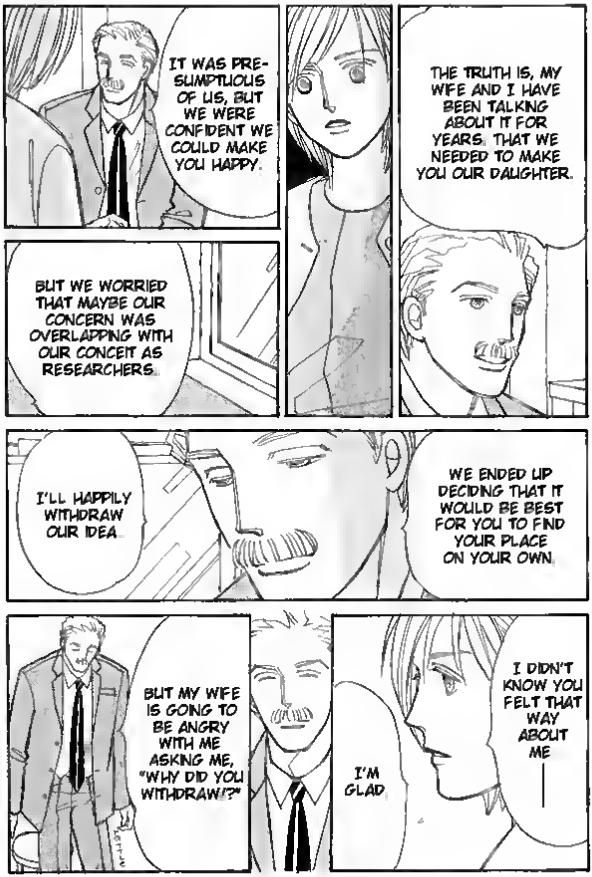

I FEEL LIKE IT'S SOMETHING I LOST LONG AGO.
I REALLY DON'T FEEL ANYTHING. IT WASN'T A SHOCK.
GOTCHA?
GOT-CHA
NO. WHATEVER PLACE YOU'RE IN
YOUR HOSPITAL ROOM IS?
THIS IS MY HOME RIGHT NOW.
FLOOMP
THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE FELT I NEED TO DO.
HUH?
AND THIS CLARIFIED MY FEELINGS.

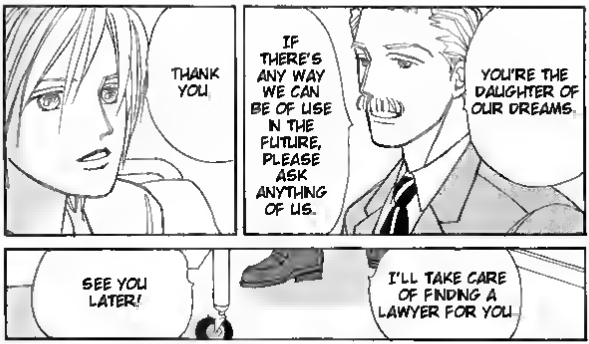

RIO-CHAN, THAT STUFF IS ACTUALLY BEING STORED AT MY AUNT'S PLACE
HUH?
FOR THE TIME BEING, I GUESS IT'S KIND OF TOO BAD THAT MY NECESSARY POSSESSIONS, LIKE MY BOOKS AND NOTES, MIGHT HAVE BEEN BURNT.
I'M HAPPY WE CAN SEE HER RECOVERING.

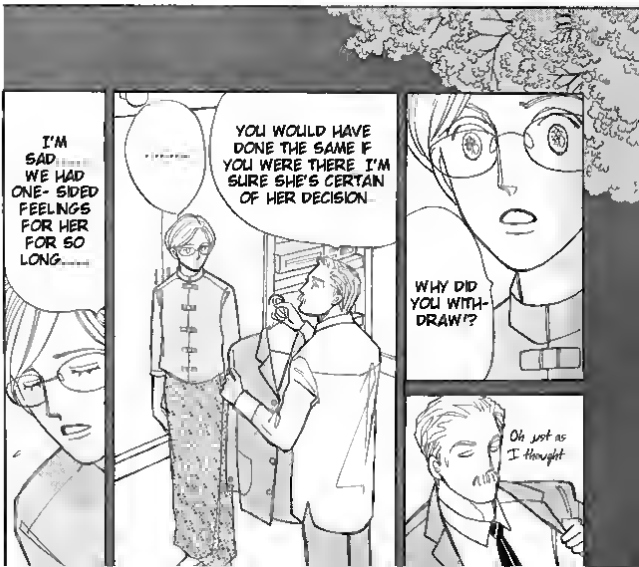
NOT EVEN ONCE...
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOUR PARENTS SINCE THEN?
THEY'VE GONE THROUGH A LOT OF DIFFICULTIES, BUT THINGS HAVE CALMED DOWN NOW... ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS THE SHOCK HAS HAD A LASTING EFFECT ON SHIGEKO-SAN...
I SEE...
I TALKED TO YOUR FATHER A BIT OVER THE PHONE YESTERDAY.
PROBABLY...
I'M SURE THAT THEY'LL BE BUILDING A BIGGER HOUSE WITH THE INSURANCE MONEY...
A LAWYER?
COULD YOU INTRODUCE ME TO A LAWYER?
HUH?
I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU, SENSEI


I'D LIKE TO ASK ABOUT MY TRUST FUND AND OTHER SUCH THINGS. I'D LIKE TO BE CLEARED ECONOMICALLY SO THAT I CAN SEPARATE FROM MY FAMILY.
I DO KNOW ONE, BUT WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?
!?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT A LOT SINCE I'VE BEEN IN HERE, AND I THINK IT'S THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION.
I DON'T WANT TO WASTE MY TIME GATHERING UP SCATTERED, BROKEN PIECES.
I WANT TO JUST END IT ALREADY. AND THROUGH REASONABLE, PROPER METHODS.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A HEAVY BURDEN ON MY FATHER TO FEEL LIKE HE HAD TO LOVE ME, HIS DAUGHTER, EVEN THOUGH HE REALLY DOESN'T. IT'S THE SAME FOR ME, IN REGARDS TO THE REST OF MY FAMILY.

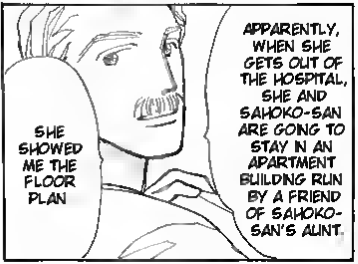

IT'S BECAUSE I REALIZED THAT I HAVE TO LIVE
THAT'S QUITE DRASTIC
BECAUSE YOU HAVE SAHOKO-SAN?
YES
HUH?
I NEVER EXPECTED THAT YOU WOULD BEAT US TO IT.
I SEE


IT WAS PRESUMPTUOUS OF US, BUT WE WERE CONFIDENT WE COULD MAKE YOU HAPPY.
THE TRUTH IS, MY WIFE AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT FOR YEARS. THAT WE NEEDED TO MAKE YOU OUR DAUGHTER.
BUT WE WORRIED THAT MAYBE OUR CONCERN WAS OVERLAPPING WITH OUR CONCEIT AS RESEARCHERS.
I'LL HAPPILY WITHDRAW OUR IDEA.
WE ENDED UP DECIDING THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU TO FIND YOUR PLACE ON YOUR OWN.
BUT MY WIFE IS GOING TO BE ANGRY WITH ME ASKING ME, "WHY DID YOU WITHDRAW!?"
I'M GLAD.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU FELT THAT WAY ABOUT ME——


THANK YOU.
IF THERE'S ANY WAY WE CAN BE OF USE IN THE FUTURE, PLEASE ASK ANYTHING OF US.
YOU'RE THE DAUGHTER OF OUR DREAMS.
SEE YOU LATER!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF FINDING A LAWYER FOR YOU.

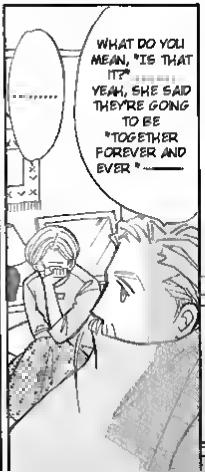

I'M SAD..... WE HAD ONE-SIDED FEELINGS FOR HER FOR SO LONG.....
YOU WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME IF YOU WERE THERE. I'M SURE SHE'S CERTAIN OF HER DECISION.
WHY DID YOU WITHDRAW!?
Oh, just as I thought

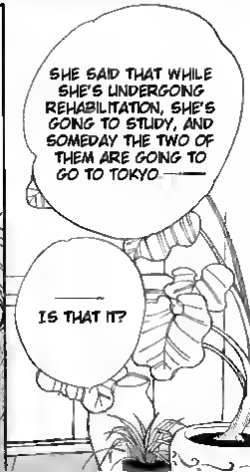
LET'S FORGET THE PAST AND LIVE FOR THE FUTURE, TOO. FOR THE TIME BEING, BECAUSE OF THE FIRE, SHIGEKO-SAN WON'T BE ABLE TO INTERFERE ANYMORE, SO THAT'S A RELIEF.


SHE SHOWED ME THE FLOOR PLAN
APPARENTLY, WHEN SHE GETS OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, SHE AND SAHOKO-SAN ARE GOING TO STAY IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING RUN BY A FRIEND OF SAHOKO-SAN'S AUNT.

DOES RIO-CHAN HAVE ANY PLANS? FOR THE FUTURE

I'M GOING TO BOLDLY BE THE BAD GUY HERE.
I'M AGANST IT.

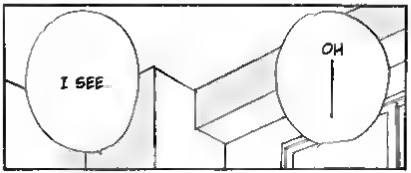

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "IS THAT IT?" YEAH, SHE SAID THEY'RE GOING TO BE "TOGETHER FOREVER AND EVER."

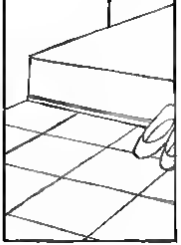

SHE SAID THAT WHILE SHE'S UNDERGOING REHABILITATION, SHE'S GOING TO STUDY, AND SOMEDAY THE TWO OF THEM ARE GOING TO GO TO TOKYO.
IS THAT IT?

IT'S THOSE TIMES THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
ALTHOUGH THE SORT OF THING THAT SHIGEKO-SAN SUGGESTED WAS ABSURD, I THINK RIO-CHAN REALLY DOES NEED OFFICIAL MEDICAL TREATMENT. SHE'S CURRENTLY STABLE, BUT IF SHE'S THROWN OUT INTO THE WORLD THE WAY SHE IS RIGHT NOW, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF SITUATIONS SHE'LL HAVE TO FACE.
YOU KNOW,
BUT SAHOKO-SAN WILL BE WITH HER. SHE'S A REALLY GOOD GIRL, AS YOU KNOW.
IT'S THOUGHT OF AS A TERRIBLE CASE
THAT CAN BE A GOOD THING IF IT'S FROM A GOOD PERSON, BUT IF IT HAPPENS THE OTHER WAY AROUND,
GIRLS AROUND THEIR AGE ARE PRONE TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL RESONANCE.
.....
IN THIS SORT OF CASE, THEIR WANTING IT ISN'T ENOUGH

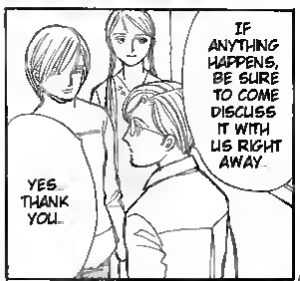
I'M SPEAKING OF IT IRRESPONSIBLY, BUT THIS IS A GAMBLE.
SEEING THEIR HAPPY FACES WHEN THEY'RE TOGETHER, I'VE COME TO THINK THAT THIS IS BETTER THAN ANY MEDICAL PROGRAM OR REVOLUTIONARY NEW MEDICINE
FOR THE TIME BEING, LET'S SEE HOW THINGS GO. THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN DO BEHIND-THE-SCENES
IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS THAT LIBERAL ARTS ARE.....
I JUST HAVE A GOOD IMAGINATION.

NO, NO, I COULDN'T ASK A LADY TO DO THAT
UM, IS THIS THE LAST OF IT?
THAT'S RIGHT. OH, SENSEI, I'LL CARRY THAT.
WILL SHE BE ALL RIGHT ON THE STAIRS? WOULDN'T THE FIRST FLOOR HAVE BEEN BETTER?
GO AHEAD, SENSEI. WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
MAY I TAKE A LOOK AROUND?
THIS ONE?
OH, BUT BE CAREFUL.
WE PURPOSELY ASKED FOR ONE ON THE SECOND FLOOR. WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GOOD PRACTICE FOR ME
WELL, I KNOW NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT GIRLS' ROOMS, SO I'M A LITTLE NERVOUS


I SEE...
OH

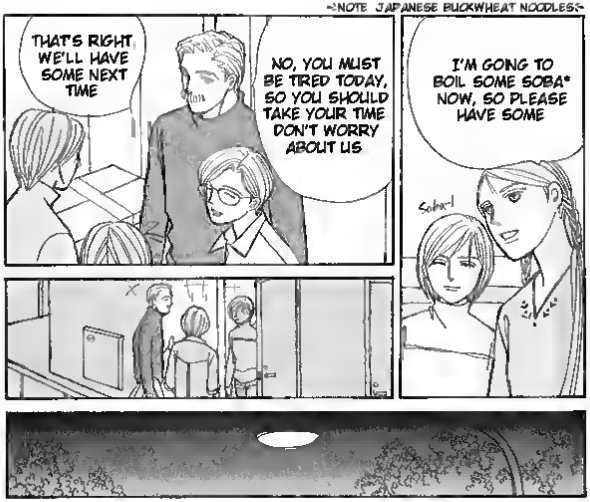


I'M RELIEVED

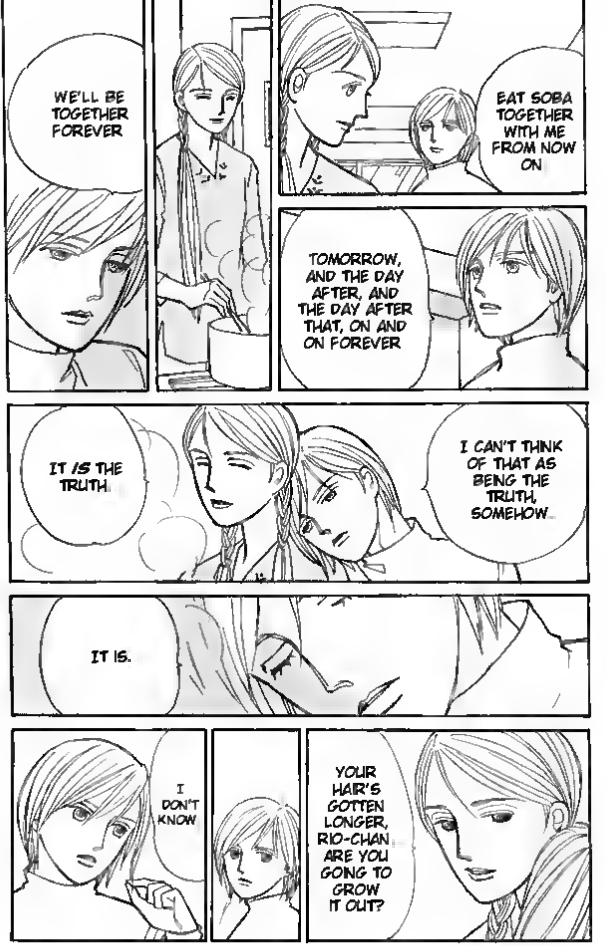

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, BE SURE TO COME DISCUSS IT WITH US RIGHT AWAY.
YES. THANK YOU.

WELL, WE SHOULD TAKE OUR LEAVE NOW.

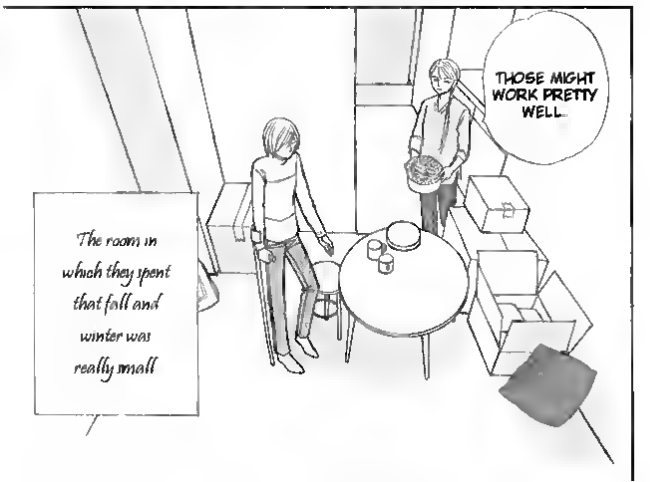
WHAT A CUTE ROOM.
NO, IT'S QUITE NICE AND IT'S NEAR THE HOSPITAL, TOO.
IT'S PRETTY SMALL, THOUGH.

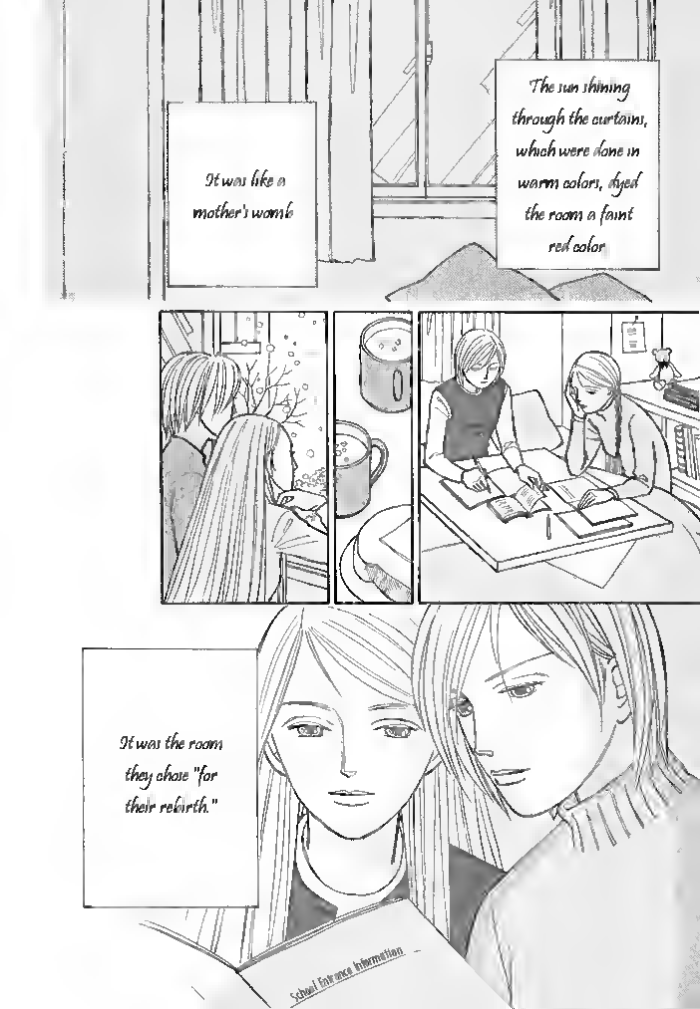

~NOTE JAPANESE BUCKWHEAT NOODLES~
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'LL HAVE SOME NEXT TIME
NO, YOU MUST BE TIRED TODAY, SO YOU SHOULD TAKE YOUR TIME DON'T WORRY ABOUT US
I'M GOING TO BOIL SOME SOBA* NOW, SO PLEASE HAVE SOME
Sobaa!
OF COURSE.
PSYCHOLOGISTS CERTAINLY ARE THOUGHTFUL, AREN'T WE?
YOU REALLY WANT THOSE TWO TO BE HAPPY, BUT SOMEWHERE IN MY HEART,
HM?
BUT I'VE REALLY BECOME A DEPLORABLE PERSON.

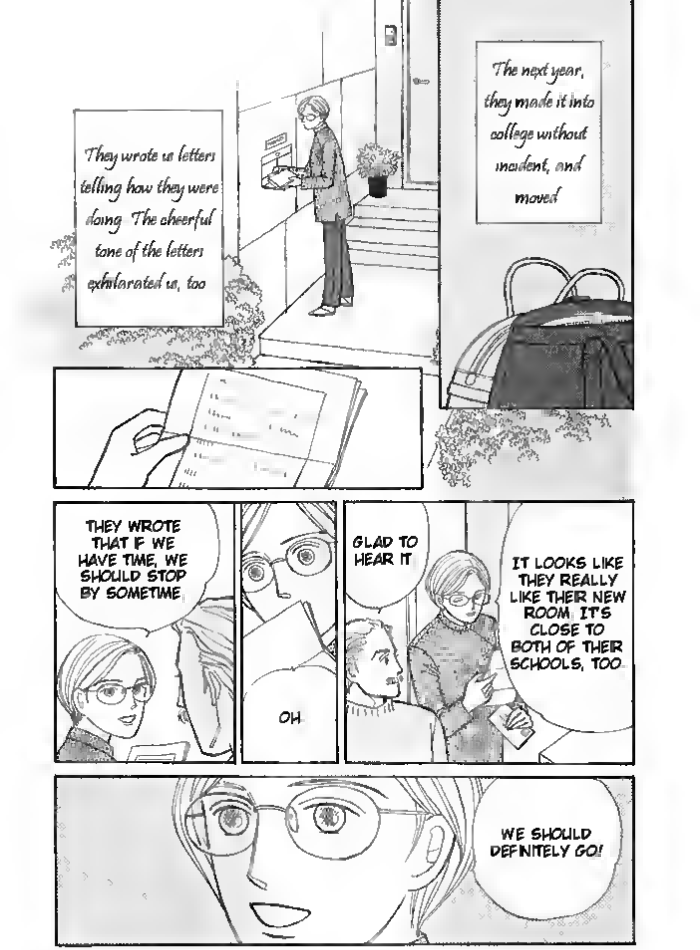
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. IT'S IN YOUR NATURE AS A DOCTOR
I GUESS IT REALLY IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO BECOME A MOTHER
I'M ANTICIPATING THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A LONG-LASTING, ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME MAGNIFICENT EXPERIMENT RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES.
THEY HAVE A LONG WAY AHEAD OF THEM
ANYWAY, LET'S HOPE FOR THEIR SUCCESS
YEAH
DO YOU LIKE SOBA, RIO-CHAN?
THERE, THAT'S TWO SERVINGS OF SOBA.


WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER
EAT SOBA TOGETHER WITH ME FROM NOW ON
TOMORROW, AND THE DAY AFTER, AND THE DAY AFTER THAT, ON AND ON FOREVER
IT *IS* THE TRUTH.
I CAN'T THINK OF THAT AS BEING THE TRUTH, SOMEHOW...
IT IS.
I DON'T KNOW
YOUR HAIR'S GOTTEN LONGER, RIO-CHAN. ARE YOU GOING TO GROW IT OUT?

HOW ABOUT MUGS?
WE DON'T HAVE SOBA CHOKO*, SO WE HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO USE INSTEAD
I'LL PASS
hehe
HOW ABOUT HAVING MATCHING BRAIDS? I BET BRAIDS WOULD LOOK GOOD ON YOU.
*NOTE: CUPS USED FOR DIPPING SAUCE WITH SOBA.
MUGS....

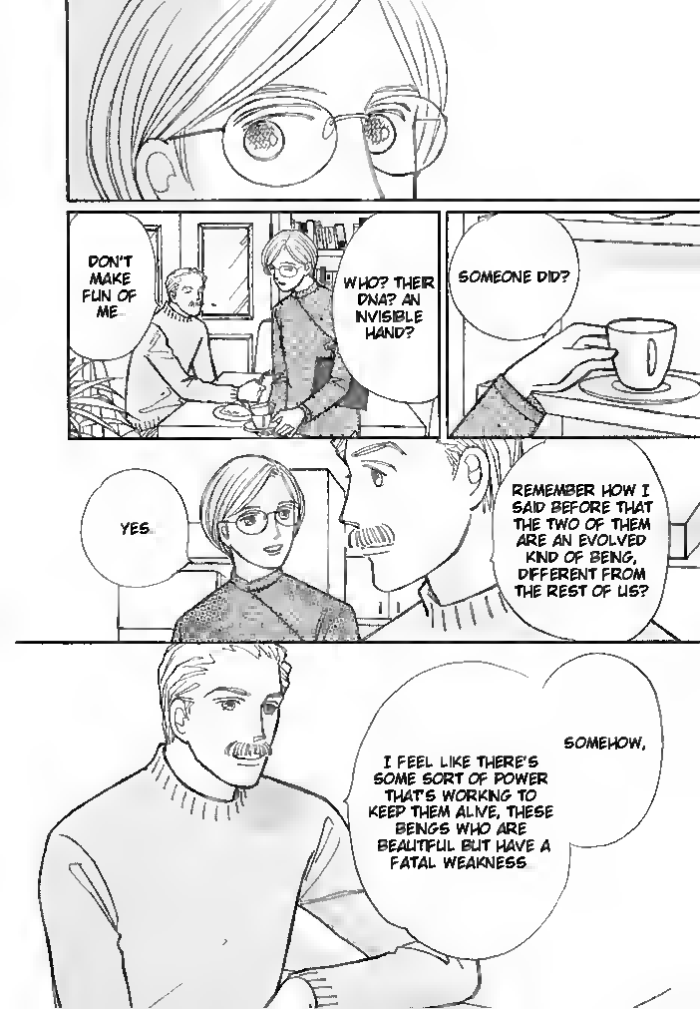

THOSE MIGHT WORK PRETTY WELL.
The room in which they spent that fall and winter was really small


It was like a mother's womb
The sun shining through the curtains, which were done in warm colors, dyed the room a faint red color
It was the room they chose "for their rebirth."
School Entrance Information


They wrote us letters telling how they were doing. The cheerful tone of the letters exhilarated us, too.
The next year, they made it into college without incident, and moved.
THEY WROTE THAT IF WE HAVE TIME, WE SHOULD STOP BY SOMETIME.
OH
GLAD TO HEAR IT
IT LOOKS LIKE THEY REALLY LIKE THEIR NEW ROOM. IT'S CLOSE TO BOTH OF THEIR SCHOOLS, TOO.
WE SHOULD DEFINITELY GO!

I KNOW. I'LL CONTACT THEM AND MAKE SURE IT'S CONVENIENT FOR THEM FOR THE TIME BEING, HOW DOES SUNDAY SOUND? I'M OFF THAT DAY, TOO.
THAT'S TOO MUCH, WE'D BE BOTHERING THEM
HEY, HEY, MISSUS
NOW THAT I'M THINKING ABOUT IT, IT'S LESS THAN AN HOUR AWAY BY TRAIN. WE COULD GO SEE THEM EVERY WEEK IF WE WANTED
THAT BRINGS ME BACK. WE TOOK A LOT BACK THEN, DIDN'T WE?
THAT'S RIGHT, WE NEED TO THINK OF A HOUSEWARMING GIFT. WHAT WOULD BE GOOD? SOMETHING USEFUL
YOU SEEM REALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THIS
LET'S BRING THIS, TOO
OLD PICTURES!

THEY WERE BORN IN DIFFERENT YEARS AND PLACES, BUT THEY SOMEHOW ENDED UP IN THE SAME CLASS AT THE SAME SCHOOL.
TWO GIRLS, ONE WHO WASN'T TRULY LOVED AT ALL AND ONE WHO WAS LOVED TOO MUCH, MET.
HUH?
BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE?
IT'S LIKE SOMEONE WORKED FRANTICALLY TO COORDINATE THEIR FATE FOR THE SAKE OF THE PRESENT TIME
MORE THAN BEING A COINCIDENCE,


DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME
WHO? THEIR DNA? AN INVISIBLE HAND?
SOMEONE DID?
YES.
REMEMBER HOW I SAID BEFORE THAT THE TWO OF THEM ARE AN EVOLVED KIND OF BEING, DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF US?
SOMEHOW,
I FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOME SORT OF POWER THAT'S WORKING TO KEEP THEM ALIVE, THESE BEINGS WHO ARE BEAUTIFUL BUT HAVE A FATAL WEAKNESS

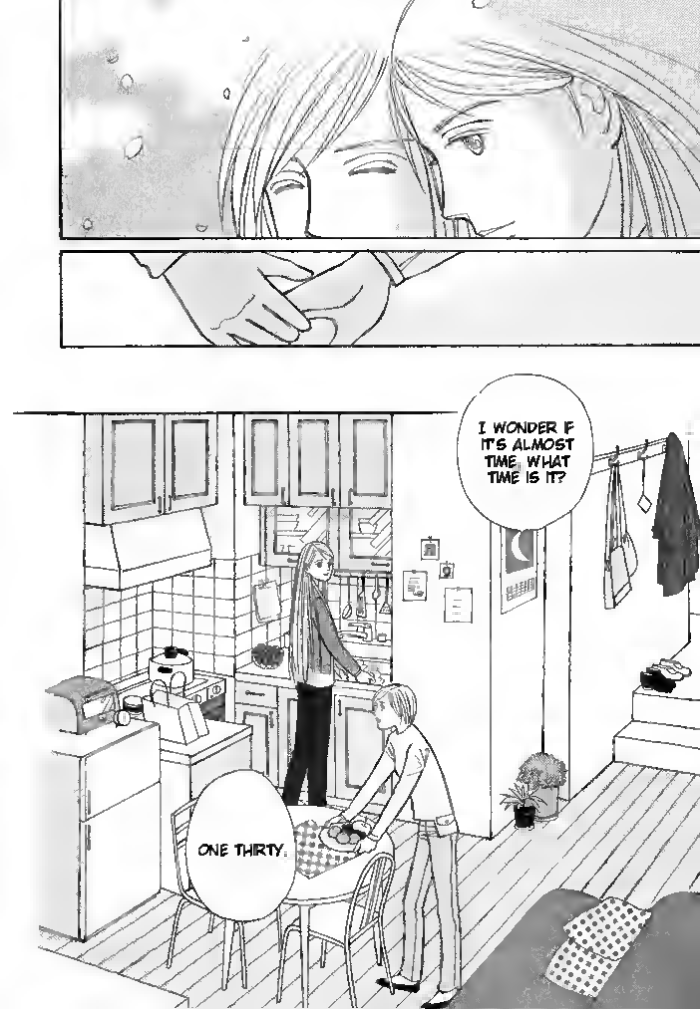
I BET IN ORDER FOR THEM TO SURVIVE, IT'S NECESSARY FOR THEM TO BE NEAR EACH OTHER.
IN ORDER FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, EVENTS IN THEIR LIVES CAN BE CHANGED, AND MIRACLES CAN EVEN HAPPEN.
EVEN WE, BEING ONE OF THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS, MIGHT HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THIS PARTICULAR TIME AND PLACE.
AS MERE EXTRAS MEANT TO HELP THE TWO OF THEM. UNFORTUNATELY,
WE WEREN'T ABLE TO BE OF MUCH USE TO THEM.
HOW ROMANTIC IT'S JUST LIKE YOU.
BUT IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, THEN YOU CAN ATTACH SOME GREAT MEANING TO *ANY* MEETING.

NOTE: A KIND OF JAPANESE NOODLE
I GET IT!
FOR EXAMPLE, IF I HADN'T BEEN STANDING IN LINE BEHIND YOU THAT DAY IN THE CAFETERIA WHEN YOU DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO COVER YOUR UDON* MEAL AND WERE JUST STANDING THERE——
THANKS FOR LENDING ME, A COMPLETE STRANGER, 300 YEN!
BUT PEOPLE WHO CAN ASSERT THAT THEY WERE BORN SO THAT THEY COULD MEET UP SOMEHOW IN THIS VAST WORLD SO THAT THEY COULD ALLOW EACH OTHER TO LIVE
HOWEVER ——THAT'S RIGHT. I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT THERE COULD REALLY BE PEOPLE WHO ENCOUNTER GUARDIAN ANGELS
ARE, AS YOU SAID, ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM PEOPLE WHO MEET BECAUSE OF SOMETHING LIKE AN UDON MEAL. THEIR MEETING MIGHT HAVE BEEN DETERMINED LONG, LONG AGO FROM A COSMIC STANDPOINT.

FOR THE SAKE OF A SMALL, TINY NEW BRANCH, SHAKING IN THE WIND, AT THE TIP OF THE "TREE OF EVOLUTION."

Right now it's just a hunch.

That it's for the sake of an unknown future.


I WONDER IF IT'S ALMOST TIME. WHAT TIME IS IT?
ONE THIRTY.

OH!
SENSEI!! OVER HEERE!
I'LL COME DOWN RIGHT NOOW!
URGH
THEY'RE PRETTY HIGH UP, AREN'T THEY...?
DON'T LET THE PAST CAUSE YOU WORRY NOW.
THEY WROTE IN THEIR LETTER THAT THEY PICKED THAT ROOM BECAUSE THEY KNEW EVERYTHING WAS FINE NOW, REMEMBER?
YOU'RE RIGHT.

*NOTE: THIS IS A RITUAL EXPRESSION, OJAMASHIMASU, SAID WHEN ENTERING ANOTHER'S HOME.
WE'LL BE INTRUDING IN YOUR HOME.*
YOU BOTH SEEM WELL.
WE'VE BEEN AWAITING YOU.
WELCOME!
HOW PRETTY!
PLEASE TAKE THESE, FIRST OF ALL.

Beyond the plain of my memory.

In the sea of existence.

Above the elliptical orbit of the planet of feeling.

No matter where you are,
I'll find you
again and again

And then we'll
come here.

We'll spread our wings,
which were folded inside time.

And space will begin to sing

a song not yet known to a single person

"Pietà #5" —END—

ピエタ
pieta

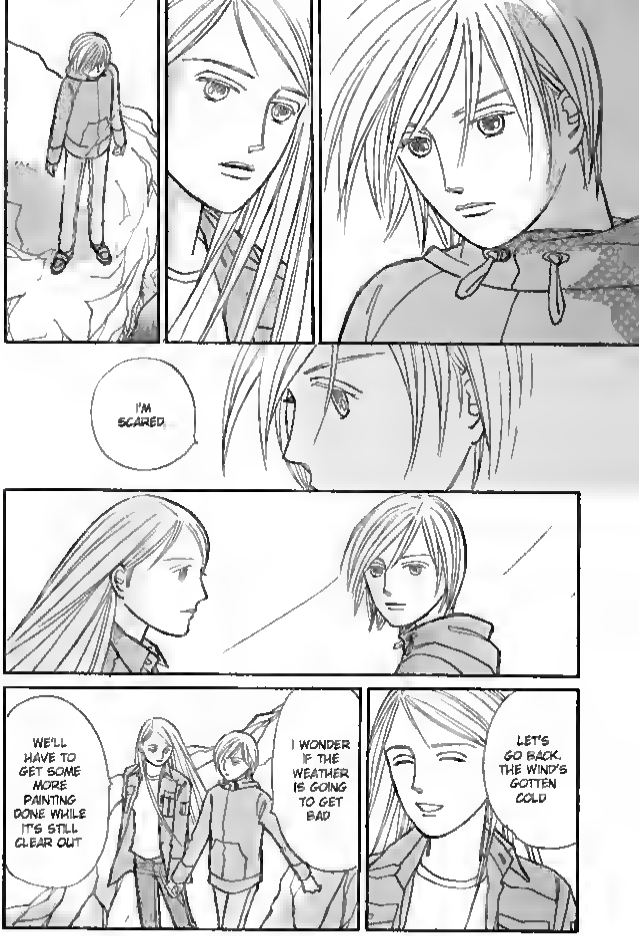
extra story. "A Week at the Beach"

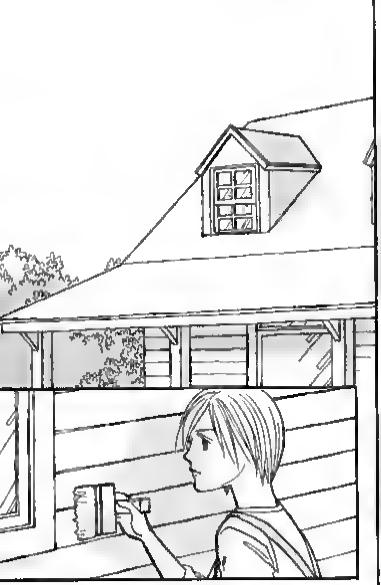
RATTLE
MIND
I'M HOME
CLICK

WE GOT A POST-CARD FROM SAKAKI-KUN AND SAHOKO-SAN. IT'S ON THE TABLE.
WELCOME HOME
OH -- IT'S SO LATE. THE MEETING WAS SUPPOSED TO END AT EIGHT!
WELL!
IT'S FROM THE PLACE THEY'RE VACATION-ING AT
IT SAYS THAT THEY'RE STAYING IN SAHOKO-SAN'S AUNT'S SUMMER HOUSE AND DOING SOME WORK ON IT AS A SUMMER JOB.
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH
I HOPE THERE AREN'T ANY TALL CLIFFS OR LEDGES NEARBY...
THE OCEAN ..
THAT'S NEAR THE OCEAN, ISN'T IT?
YEAH. IT SOUNDS LIKE A PRETTY NICE PLACE

LOOK, IT'S REALLY A PLEASANT AND LIVELY MESSAGE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.

SHHHH
SHHHH
SHHHH

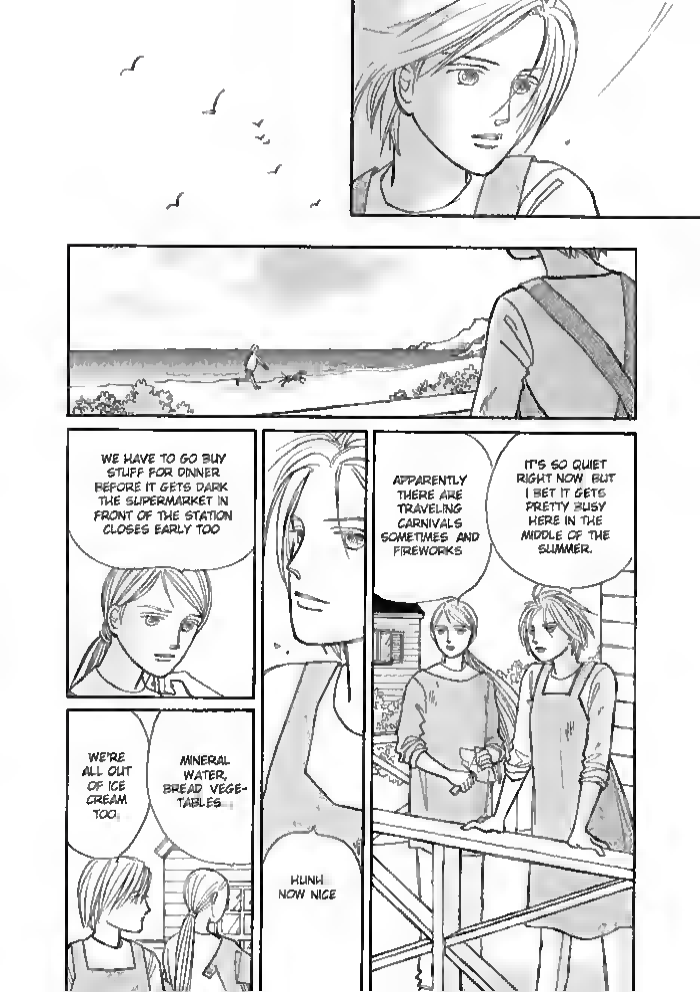

I'M SCARED.
LET'S GO BACK. THE WIND'S GOTTEN COLD
I WONDER IF THE WEATHER IS GOING TO GET BAD
WE'LL HAVE TO GET SOME MORE PAINTING DONE WHILE IT'S STILL CLEAR OUT



DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL GET BETTER DAY BY DAY.
REALLY?

IT'S UNEVEN, ISN'T IT?

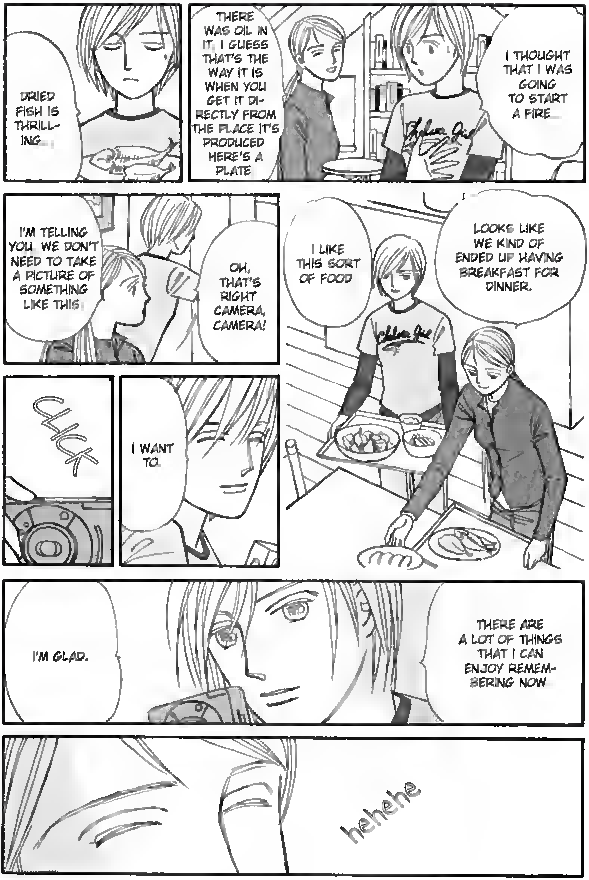
YOU'RE RIGHT

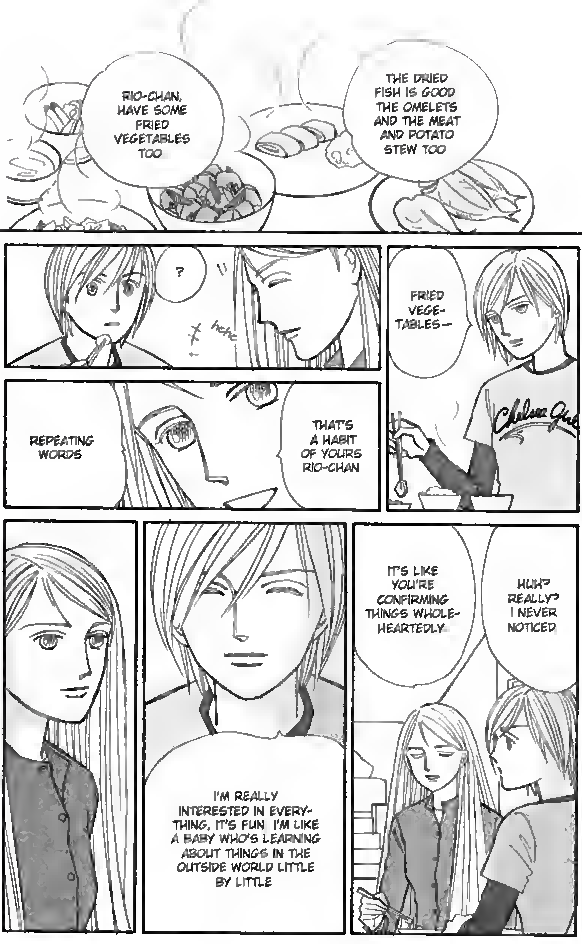

IT'S SO QUIET RIGHT NOW BUT I BET IT GETS PRETTY BUSY HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SUMMER.
APPARENTLY THERE ARE TRAVELING CARNIVALS SOMETIMES AND FIREWORKS
HUHH NOW NICE
WE HAVE TO GO BUY STUFF FOR DINNER BEFORE IT GETS DARK THE SUPERMARKET IN FRONT OF THE STATION CLOSES EARLY TOO
MINERAL WATER, BREAD VEGE-TABLES
WE'RE ALL OUT OF ICE CREAM TOO.

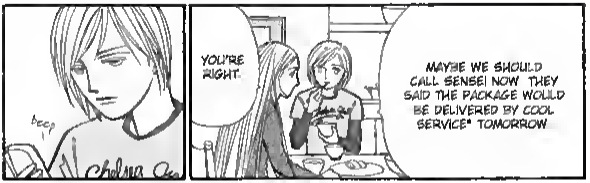
GOT IT.
ICE CREAM!
DRIED FISH
IT'S DRIED FISH. THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'D MAKE A YUMMY DINNER. HOW ABOUT IT?
SIGHTSEEING MEISAN CENTER
OH, HOW ABOUT LOOKING IN THE MEISAN* CENTER FOR A BIT?
*PRODUCTS THAT AN AREA IS KNOWN FOR
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE SO THOUGHTFUL, RIO-CHAN. YOU'RE GREAT!
She praised me. I'm happy.
AND SOME TO YOUR AUNT FOR LETTING US USE HER NICE HOUSE.
HOW ABOUT WE SEND SOME OF THESE TO SENSEI AND HIS WIFE? AS A SOUVENIR FROM OUR TRIP
OH, YEAH.

"HIGH."
THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T BURN THEM TO A CRISP! PUT THE FAN ON "HIGH." OKAY?
IT'S A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY.
I THINK THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER COOKED DRIED FISH...
...OKAY...
I'LL MAKE ASARI* MISO SOUP, RIO-CHAN, YOU COOK THE DRIED FISH!
*SHORT-NECKED CLAM
STARE...
IT'S ALL RIGHT. TURN THE STOVE OFF FOR A MINUTE.
WHAT DO I DO, SAHOKO-CHAN?!
ACK! ACK! OH NO! IT'S BURNING!
COMPLETELY ABSORBED

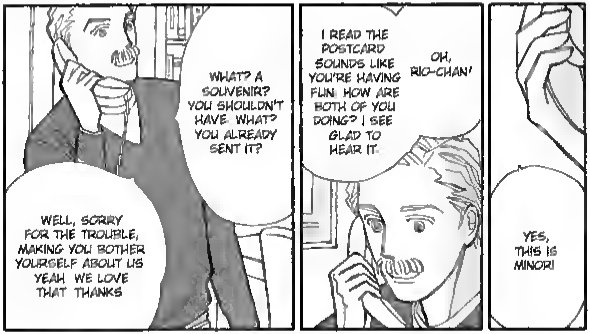
Pieta II

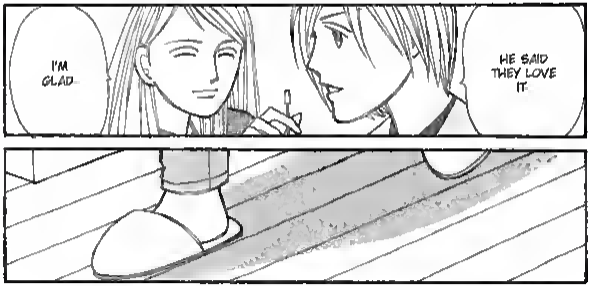

DRIED FISH IS THRILLING...
THERE WAS OIL IN IT. I GUESS THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WHEN YOU GET IT DIRECTLY FROM THE PLACE IT'S PRODUCED. HERE'S A PLATE
I THOUGHT THAT I WAS GOING TO START A FIRE...
I'M TELLING YOU, WE DON'T NEED TO TAKE A PICTURE OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. CAMERA, CAMERA!
I LIKE THIS SORT OF FOOD
LOOKS LIKE WE KIND OF ENDED UP HAVING BREAKFAST FOR DINNER.
CHCK
I WANT TO.
I'M GLAD.
THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS THAT I CAN ENJOY REMEMBERING NOW.
hehehe


RIO-CHAN, HAVE SOME FRIED VEGETABLES TOO
THE DRIED FISH IS GOOD THE OMELETS AND THE MEAT AND POTATO STEW TOO
?
FRIED VEGE-TABLES—
REPEATING WORDS
THAT'S A HABIT OF YOURS RIO-CHAN
I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN EVERY-THING, IT'S FUN. I'M LIKE A BABY WHO'S LEARNING ABOUT THINGS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD LITTLE BY LITTLE
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE CONFIRMING THINGS WHOLE-HEARTEDLY
HUH? REALLY? I NEVER NOTICED

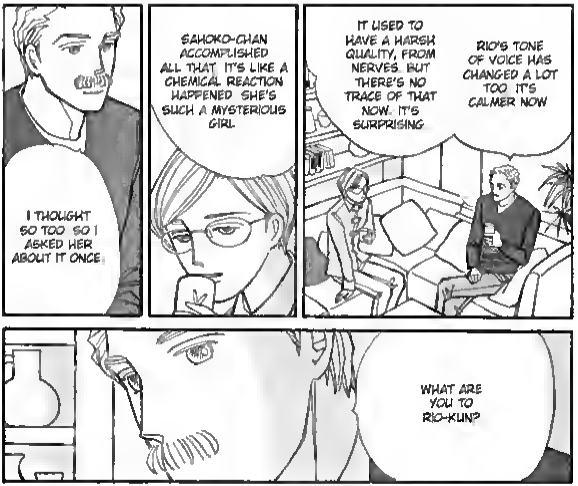


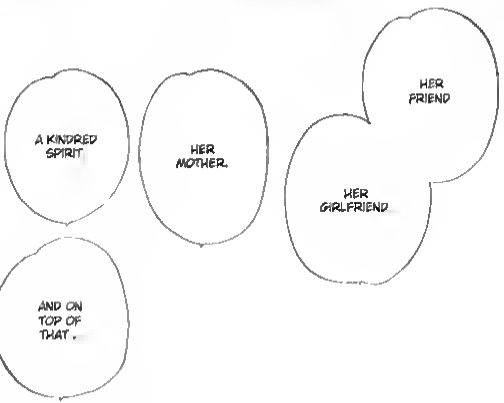
*A MAILING/DELIVERY SERVICE USED TO DELIVER ITEMS THAT NEED TO BE KEPT COLD

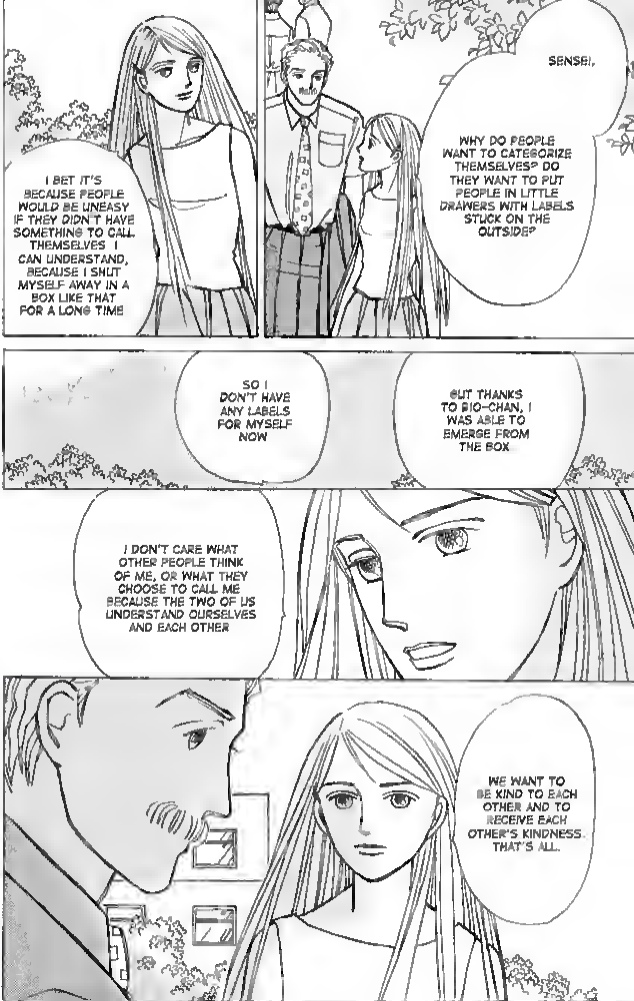

WELL, SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE, MAKING YOU BOTHER YOURSELF ABOUT US. YEAH. WE LOVE THAT. THANKS.
WHAT? A SOUVENIR? YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE. WHAT? YOU ALREADY SENT IT?
I READ THE POSTCARD. SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN. HOW ARE BOTH OF YOU DOING? I SEE. GLAD TO HEAR IT.
OH, RIO-CHAN!
YES, THIS IS MINORI.

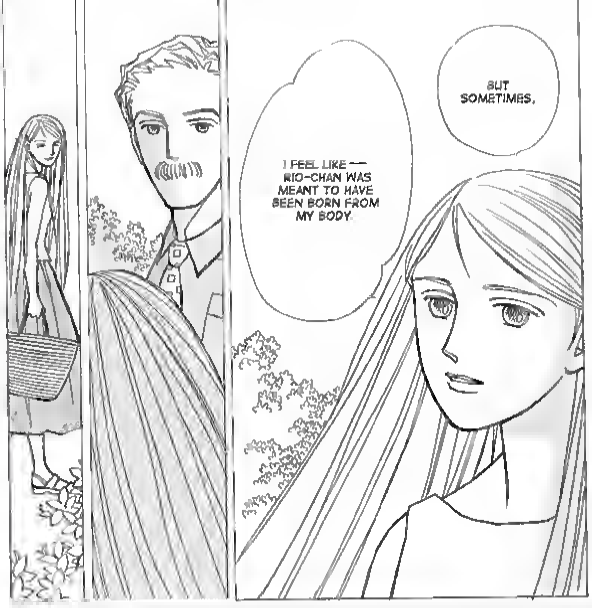


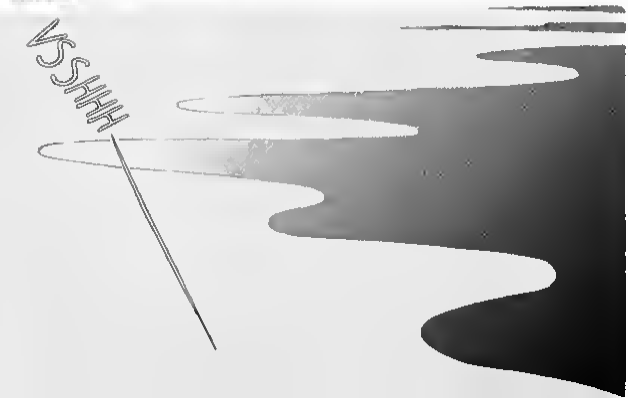
HUH?
DRIED FISH WILL BE DELIVERED TO US TOMORROW.—
COME IN.
KNOCK KNOCK
I WAS AT A POINT WHERE I WAS THINKING ABOUT STOPPING AND HAVING SOME TEA.—
WELL SHE WAS THE ONE WHO CALLED US, SO I WOULD'VE FELT BAD ABOUT MAKING IT A LONG CALL AND IT SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE BUSY WORKING.
WHAT—?! I WISH I'D BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO HER.— WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TELL ME?!
WE JUST HAD A PHONE CALL FROM RIO-KUN
GOTTEN IN THE HABIT OF DOING MATURE THINGS.
BUT THAT THEY'RE SENDING US A SOUVENIR FROM THEIR TRIP... IT'S LIKE THEY'VE SUDDENLY—
POOF
POOF

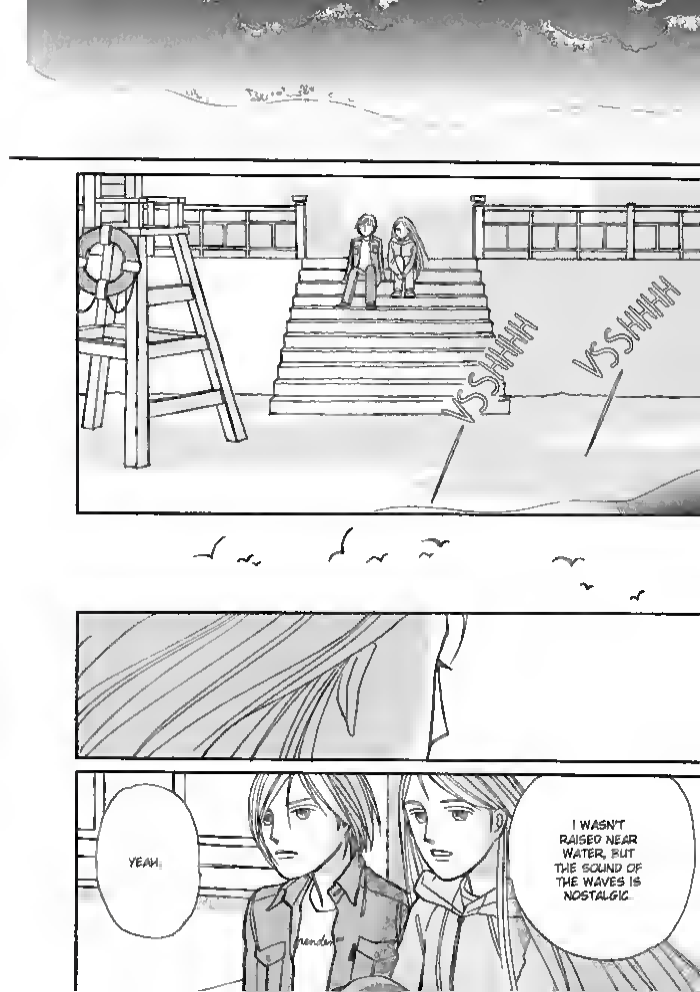

I THOUGHT SO TOO SO I ASKED HER ABOUT IT ONCE
SAHOKO-CHAN ACCOMPLISHED ALL THAT IT'S LIKE A CHEMICAL REACTION HAPPENED SHE'S SUCH A MYSTERIOUS GIRL
IT USED TO HAVE A HARSH QUALITY, FROM NERVES. BUT THERE'S NO TRACE OF THAT NOW. IT'S SURPRISING
RIO'S TONE OF VOICE HAS CHANGED A LOT TOO IT'S CALMER NOW
WHAT ARE YOU TO RIO-KUN?

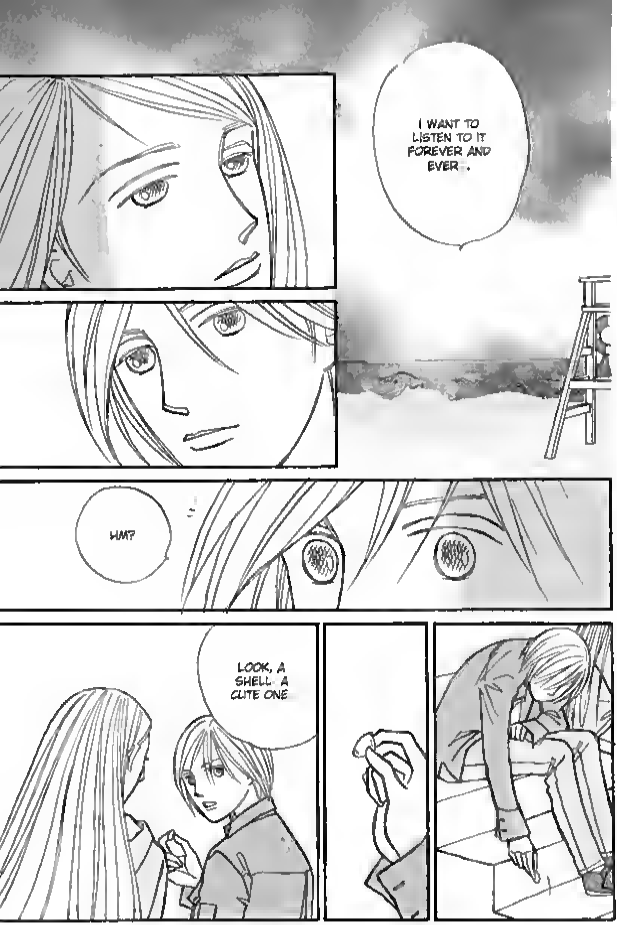

A KINDRED SPIRIT
HER MOTHER.
HER FRIEND
HER GIRLFRIEND
AND ON TOP OF THAT.

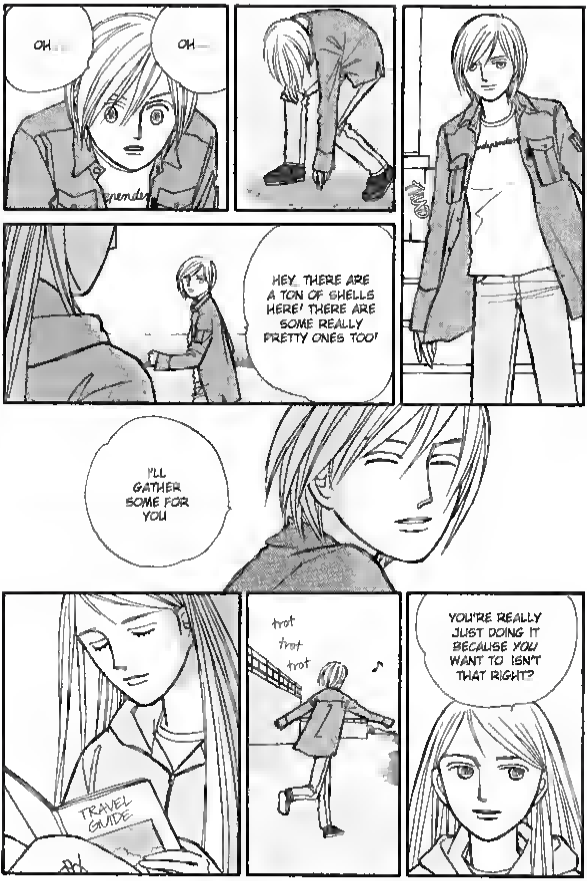

I BET IT'S BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD BE UNEASY IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING TO CALL THEMSELVES. I CAN UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE I SHUT MYSELF AWAY IN A BOX LIKE THAT FOR A LONG TIME.
SENSEI,
WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO CATEGORIZE THEMSELVES? DO THEY WANT TO PUT PEOPLE IN LITTLE DRAWERS WITH LABELS STUCK ON THE OUTSIDE?
BUT THANKS TO BIO-CHAN, I WAS ABLE TO EMERGE FROM THE BOX.
SO I DON'T HAVE ANY LABELS FOR MYSELF NOW.
I DON'T CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF ME, OR WHAT THEY CHOOSE TO CALL ME BECAUSE THE TWO OF US UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER.
WE WANT TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER AND TO RECEIVE EACH OTHER'S KINDNESS. THAT'S ALL.

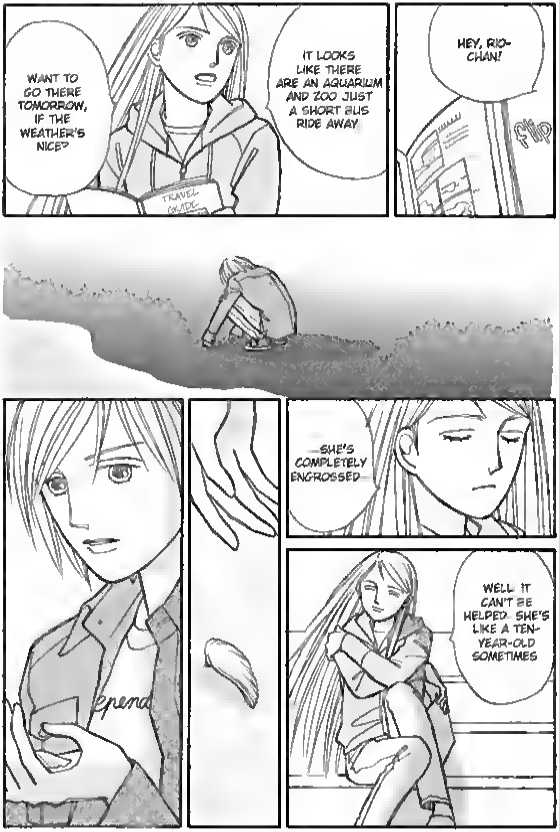

I FEEL LIKE — RIO-CHAN WAS MEANT TO HAVE BEEN BORN FROM MY BODY.
BUT SOMETIMES,


SHHH

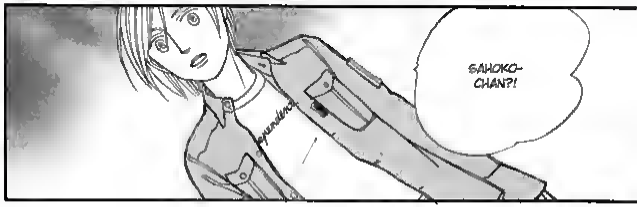

VSSHHH
VSSHHH
I WASN'T RAISED NEAR WATER, BUT THE SOUND OF THE WAVES IS NOSTALGIC
YEAH.

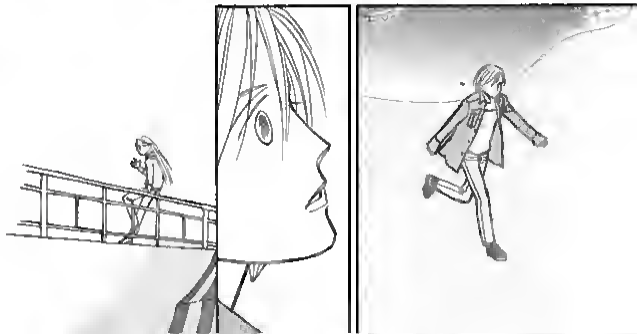

I WANT TO LISTEN TO IT FOREVER AND EVER...
HM?
LOOK, A SHELL. A CUTE ONE

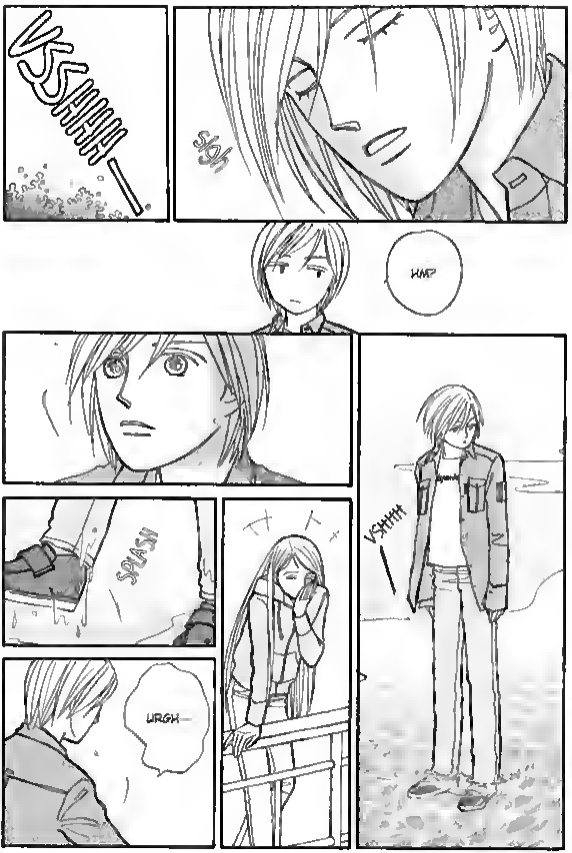

OH...
OH...
HEY, THERE ARE A TON OF SHELLS HERE! THERE ARE SOME REALLY PRETTY ONES TOO!
I'LL GATHER SOME FOR YOU
TRAVEL GUIDE
trot
trot
trot
YOU'RE REALLY JUST DOING IT BECAUSE YOU WANT TO, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

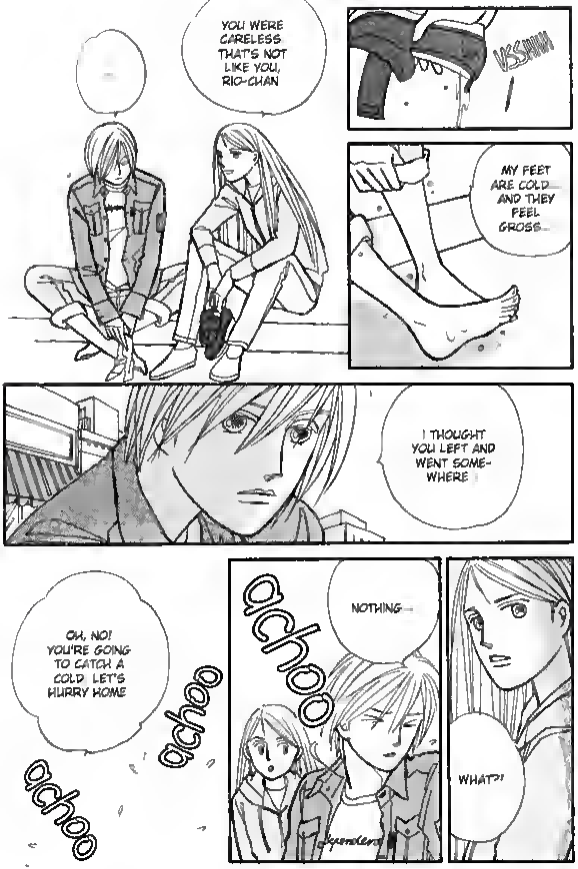

WANT TO GO THERE TOMORROW, IF THE WEATHER'S NICE?
IT LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE AN AQUARIUM AND ZOO JUST A SHORT BUS RIDE AWAY.
TRAVEL GUIDE
HEY, RIO-CHAN!
flip
—SHE'S COMPLETELY ENGROSSED—
WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED. SHE'S LIKE A TEN-YEAR-OLD SOMETIMES.

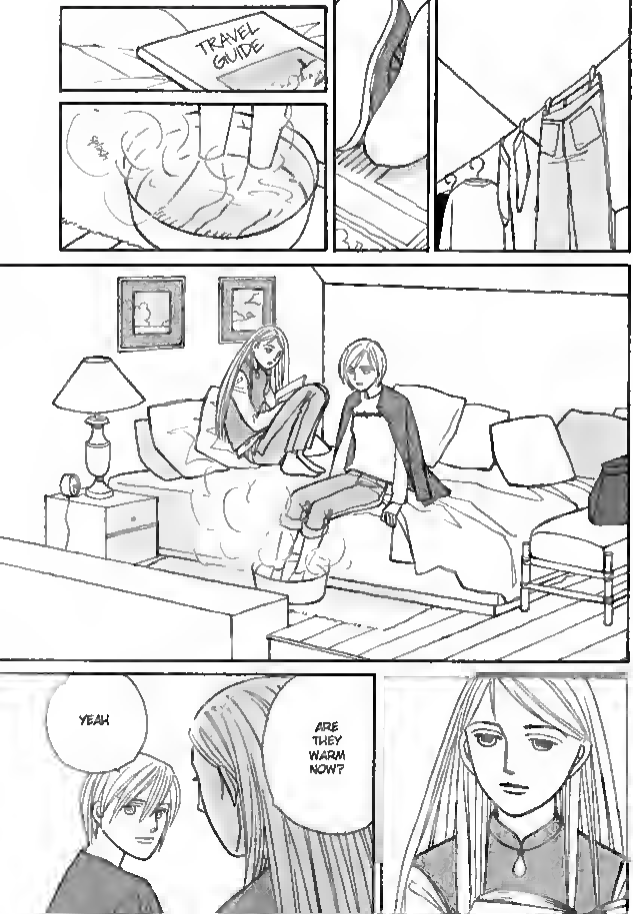
SAHOKO-CHAN, LOOK AT THIS! THIS SHELL LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL'S WING! IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE...

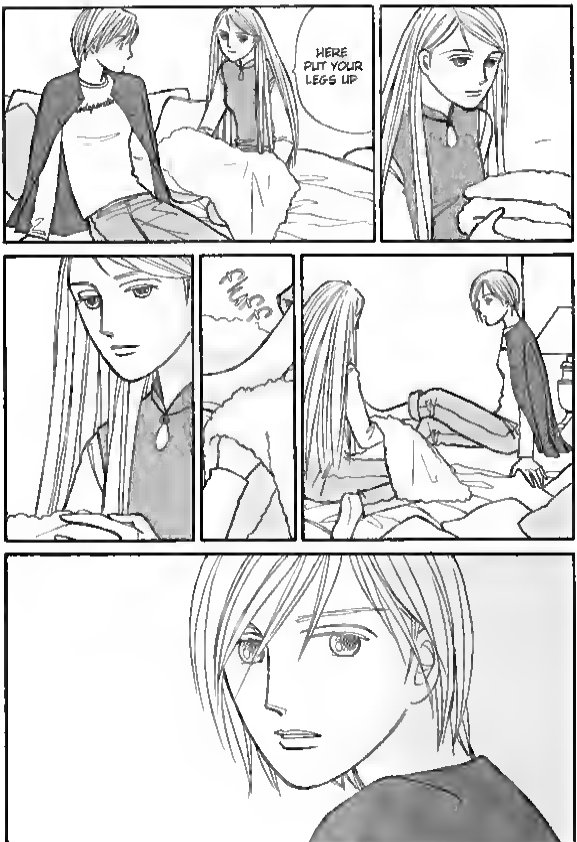

SAHOKO-CHAN?!




VSHHH!
SIGH
HMP
SPLASH
VSHHH
ウトト
URGH


YOU WERE CARELESS THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU, RIO-CHAN
KSSHHH
MY FEET ARE COLD AND THEY FEEL GROSS
I THOUGHT YOU LEFT AND WENT SOMEWHERE
NOTHING
achoo
WHAT?!
OH, NO! YOU'RE GOING TO CATCH A COLD. LET'S HURRY HOME
achoo
achoo


TRAVEL GUIDE
YEAH
ARE THEY WARM NOW?

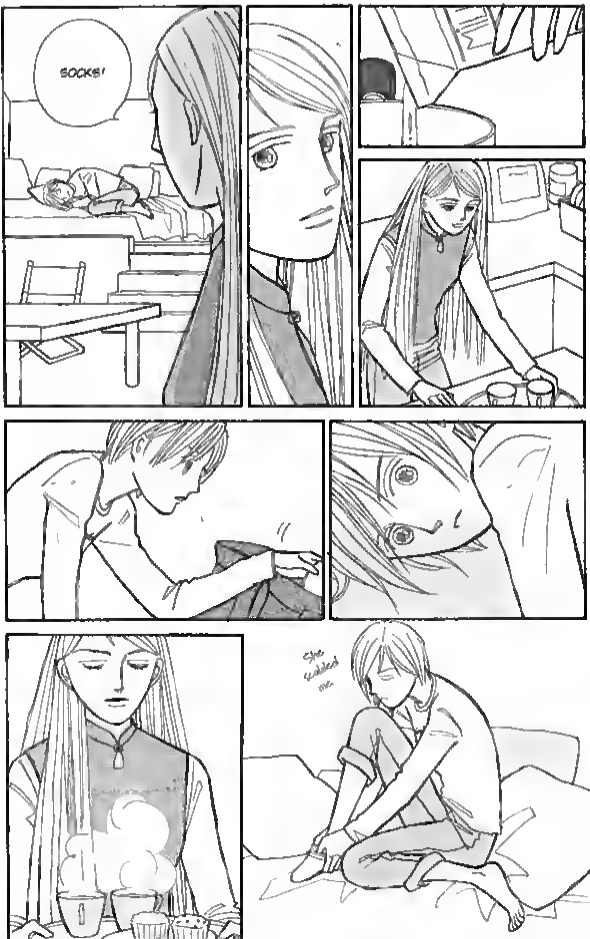

HERE PUT YOUR LEGS UP
PLOP

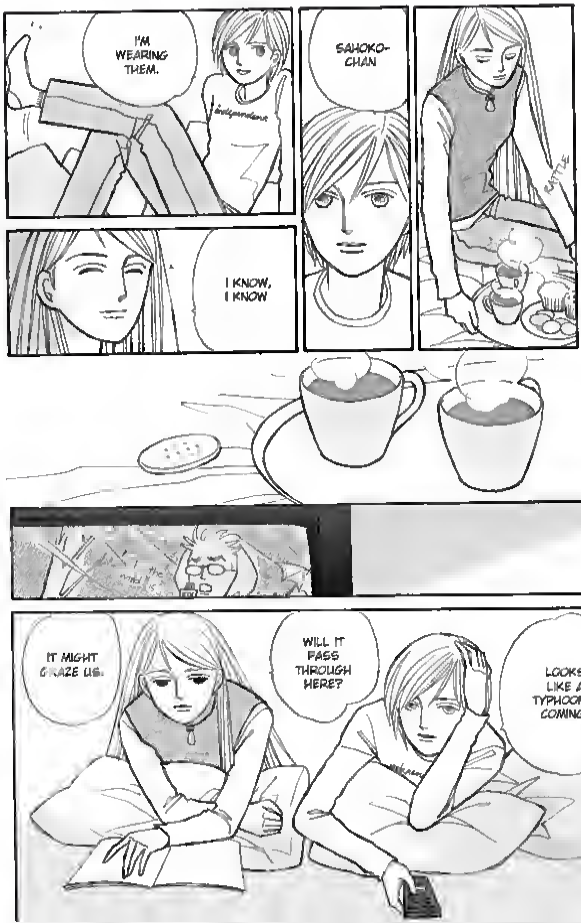
Pieta II

PUT SOME SOCKS ON RIGHT AWAY, SO THEY DON'T GET COLD.
RIGHT LEG!
underpants
CLINK
HISSH

ROLL

Pieta II



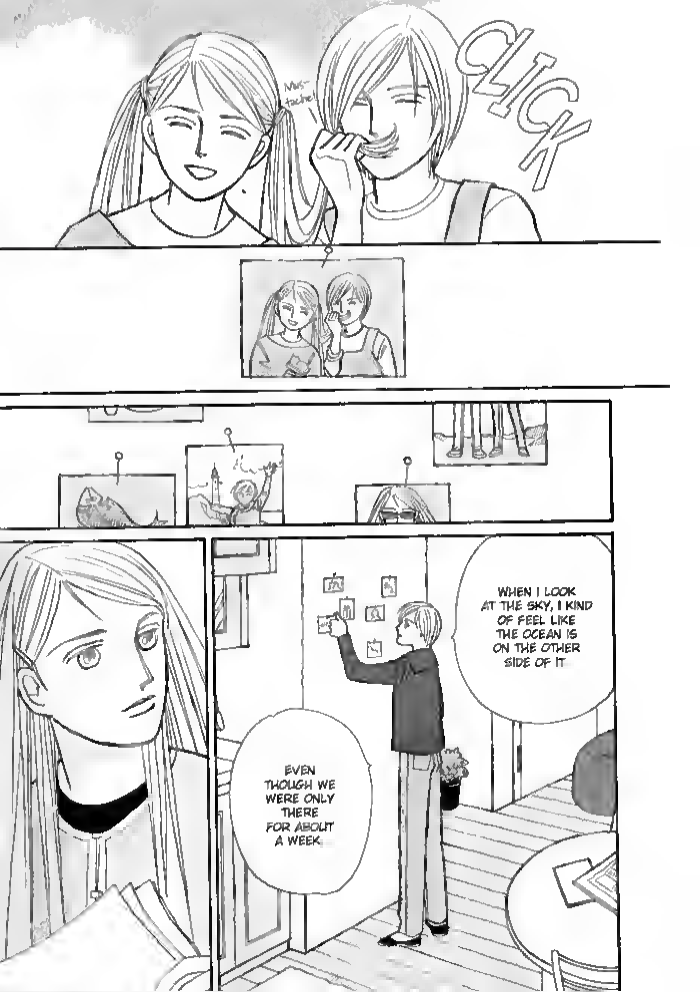

I'M WEARING THEM.
SAHOKO-CHAN
I KNOW, I KNOW
LATTE
IT MIGHT GRAZE US.
WILL IT PASS THROUGH HERE?
LOOKS LIKE A TYPHOON'S COMING

YEAH, I CHECKED
WE CLOSED ALL THE SHUTTERS, RIGHT?
COME TO THINK OF IT, I THINK THE WIND'S GOTTEN A LITTLE STRONGER.
THEN WE'LL BE FINE
MY AUNT SAID THIS PLACE IS REALLY STURDY. BUT-
WE'LL BE OKAY
WHAT IF THE ROOF FLIES OFF OR SOMETHING?
I'LL BE OKAY ANYWAY
YOU'RE TOO EASY-GOING RIO-CHAN
WE'LL BE OKAY AS LONG AS WE'RE TOGETHER
ROOOAR

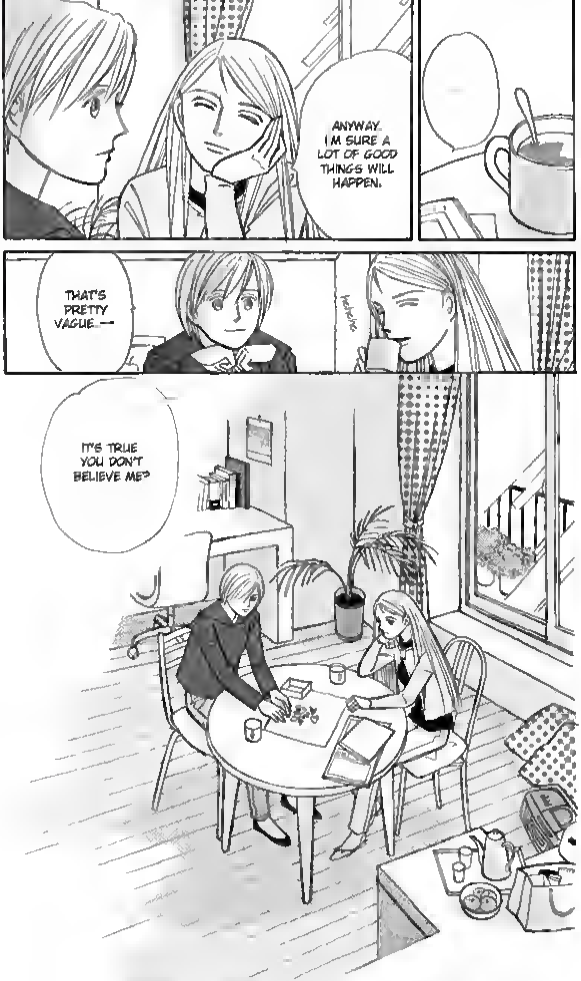
IT'S A NEW SHAMPOO.
YOU SMELL NICE, SAHOKO-CHAN. IS IT YOUR HAIR?
WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GO OUTSIDE TOMORROW. I'M GLAD WE BOUGHT A LOT OF FOOD. NO WORRIES ON THAT FRONT FOR NOW.
NO.
I TRIED OUT THE SAMPLE I GOT OF IT. YOU WANT TO TRY IT, TOO, RIO-CHAN?
IF WE SMELLED THE SAME, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TELL WHERE YOU WERE, SAHOKO-CHAN
independence

THE WEATHER IS USUALLY NICE AFTER A TYPHOON,
SO WE SHOULD FINISH UP THE PAINTING THEN
AND A LOT OF SHELLS MIGHT BE WASHED ASHORE
JELLYFISH, TOO
I DON'T WANT JELLY-FISH
whooo
VSSHHSSHHSSHHH
SHHSSHHSSHHH
SSHHSS-SHHH

JUST A LITTLE MORE LEFT. I THINK WE CAN GET IT ALL FINISHED TODAY. LET'S TAKE A PICTURE WHEN IT'S DONE
WE'LL HAVE TO SEND A COPY TO MY AUNT TOO, TO SHOW HER HOW PRETTY AND WHITE IT TURNED OUT
STARE


Mm-hm!
CLICK
WHEN I LOOK AT THE SKY, I KIND OF FEEL LIKE THE OCEAN IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT.
EVEN THOUGH WE WERE ONLY THERE FOR ABOUT A WEEK.

THIS ROOM IS MY FAVORITE PLACE TO BE.
BUT I LIKE IT HERE TOO.
YEAH
DID YOU WANT TO STAY LONGER?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE, SAHOKO-CHAN.
I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO SOMETIME SOON
BUT I KIND OF REGRET THAT WE COULDN'T GO TO THE AQUARIUM.
I'M NOT TELLING
DO YOU SEE ANYTHING ELSE?
STINGY


ANYWAY. I'M SURE A LOT OF GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN.
THAT'S PRETTY VAGUE...—
HMPH.
IT'S TRUE YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?

I DO BELIEVE IN YOU.

I ALWAYS WILL.

'A Week at the Beach' -end-

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irc.rizon.net

Pieta

Chapter 4

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Translator : Sailor Avalon
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Pieta chapter 5
Part A

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Sailor Avalon

Translated by:
Sailor Avalon

Edited by:
Sailor Avalon

Quality Checked by:
Tsufako

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Pieta chapter 5
Part B

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Sailor Avalon

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Sailor Avalon

Edited by:
Sailor Avalon

QC'd by:
bakablonde

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http://www.lililicious.net
#lililicious@irc.rizon.net

scans procured by: Sailor Avalon
translated by: Sailor Avalon
edited by: Elae
QC'ed by: ElsewhereCW, SpaceTart, & Sailor Avalon